



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL STUDY REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

C O N T I N E N T A L D I V I D E

N A T I O N A L S C E N I C T R A I L R E P O R T

September 1976

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under United States administration.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Thomas S. Kleppe, Secretary

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
John Crutcher, Director

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

In 1966, *Trails for America*/ the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation's report on the nationwide trails study, recommended the establishment of a national system of trails for those who wish to walk, hike, ride horseback and bicycle. As a part of that system, the report recommended the establishment of a limited number of national scenic trails - long extended pathways traversing the most natural and scenic portions of our country and providing the recreationist with exceptional outdoor opportunities. These extended routes would provide trail access to large areas of our Nation and to large numbers of our population. They would be the stimulus for, and the major axis of, an extensive network of trails branching out to our most attractive lands, calling attention and urging us to make wise use of our rich natural heritage.

Mentioned in *Trails for America* for early consideration as a national scenic trail was a route along or near the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains. *Trails for America* found that such a trail, capable of being located largely on existing public lands, would make available to the recreationist a challenging stretch of country possessing awesome scenic grandeur, great aesthetic value, and significant historic interest. The primary purpose of this trail would be to provide a continuous, appealing trail route, designed for the hiker and horseman, but compatible with other land uses.

Congress acted upon the general recommendations of the nationwide trails study in 1968 and established, under Public Law 90-543 the National System of Trails. Two national scenic trails were designated as initial units of the national system, the 2,000-mile Appalachian Trail and the 2,350-mile Pacific Crest Trail. The proposed Continental Divide Trail was identified as one of 14 potential national scenic trails to be studied to determine the feasibility and desirability of designating them as additions to the national trails system by future act of Congress.

The study of the proposed Continental Divide Trail was assigned to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture. The study began in June 1969 and was conducted with the active assistance of other Federal agencies - the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Fish and Wildlife Service - the States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico, and numerous private organizations and individuals.

Trails for America indicated a southern terminus for the proposed Continental Divide Trail near Silver City, New Mexico - about 150 miles short of the United States-Mexico boundary. Earlier studies on which that report was based recognized the semi-desert character of the area and on that basis made little attempt to evaluate its potentials for trails purposes. In the present study, it was considered advisable to give the area south of Silver City more detailed examination and the study area was therefore extended to include the entire Continental Divide from Canada to Mexico.

Emphasis was placed on those aspects of trail planning specifically prescribed in Section 5(b) of the National Trails System Act. Major study elements therefore included the characteristics which would make the trail a fitting addition to the national system: the trail route and plans for development; costs for development, operation and maintenance; expected visitation; land ownership and use and the economic impacts of the trail.

In the study, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation attempted to regard the feasibility and desirability of trail establishment as two separate determinations. We therefore viewed the element of feasibility as relating principally to the ability to develop such a trail in engineering sense, matters of public safety, trail costs in relation to trail use and other economic gains and losses, and to a host of environmental concerns.

The considerations entering into the determination of trail desirability are perhaps not as clearly circumscribed on the other hand. They are based more on judgment factors and have to do principally with the trail's relationship to other national recreation needs and priorities as well as official and public attitudes in general. We believe that all pertinent factors, save for the latter, have been adequately examined during the course of the study. Acceptability to the public - the ultimate test of desirability - was of course, beyond the purview of the study to determine and must await the complete review of study findings.

Efforts were made throughout the study to keep the public informed and to solicit the views of citizens about the proposed trail. Sixteen formal public meetings and a host of other discussions with large and small groups were held and progress reports were issued on a regular basis. The press and electronic media were of great assistance in publicizing the study and largely as a result of their efforts several hundred letters were received from throughout the United States containing opinions and suggestions relative to the study and the trail.

During the course of the study the views of a great many people were received. The mass of information and views received were extremely valuable for study and planning purposes and form the principal basis for the development of the following findings and recommendations.

FINDINGS

General

Designation and establishment of a 3,100-mile Continental Divide Trail from Canada to Mexico would provide the American people with recreational opportunities of national significance. This linear pathway, managed and administered within the guidelines for national scenic trails as established by Congress and Executive directive, would further our national goal of promoting public enjoyment and appreciation of our scenic outdoor areas.

This trailway would make available numerous additional outdoor recreation experiences. Trail users would wind their way through some of the most spectacular scenery in the United States and have an opportunity to enjoy a greater diversity of physical and natural qualities than found on any other extended trail. The route of the Continental Divide Trail would cross five ecological life zones where visitors would find much of the topography, climate, vegetation and wildlife for which the Rocky Mountain West is noted.

The areas through which the trail would pass are also rich in the heritage and life of the Rocky Mountains and the southwestern United States. The trail traverses lands of historical and cultural importance. It would provide the recreationist with examples of past periods of American development, examples of the many ways in which we now use our lands, as well as ways in which we could make better use of our resources through public awareness and appreciation of environmental relationships and good resource management practices.

It was found that much of the proposed Continental Divide Trail exists now in the form of discontinuous trails and primitive roadways in national forests and national parks, and it would be located largely on public lands. Many of the existing segments of trail have long histories of recreation use. Under national scenic trail status these segments would be joined to make a continuous and extended travelway offering the trail user a much greater range of options than are presently available to him. The trail experience could range from an hour's outing to several weeks and from one mile to several hundred. The trail would open up a broad spectrum of terrain and opportunity, from strenuous backpacking to leisurely strolling. Further, national scenic trail designation would provide a Congressional directive that these recreation opportunities would continue to be available, as is the case with the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails.

The National Trails System Act established the criterion that national scenic trails should be so located as to provide for the maximum outdoor recreation potential of the areas through which they pass. The proposed Continental Divide Trail meets this criterion. The Continental Divide Trail traverses portions of five states in its journey from Canada to Mexico. It would provide to all those who live in or might visit the Rocky Mountain area an opportunity to enjoy high quality recreation and to refresh themselves by involvement with the outdoors. The extended and continuous nature of this trail would assure the increased availability of recreation resources of this region to more people and access to more of the nationally significant areas along the pathway.

National designation would help ensure quality development and management of the trail. Proper design and management are essential to provide quality outdoor experiences and to minimize the impact of the trail on the natural environment. This is particularly true with respect to extended trails encompassing lands which are administered by several different agencies and managed for varied purposes and which in many instances are classed as being ecologically fragile. National scenic trail designation would assure proper and sensitive standards pertaining to establishment, operation and maintenance of the trail. Further it would provide the common objective and means to coordinate the efforts of the many agencies and interests having responsibility for implementation. It is also important to note here that these advantages would extend to the overall length of the trail. National designation would therefore provide the means to upgrade the operation and maintenance of existing travelways included in the route of the trail.

It is also felt that designation of the trail would help to stimulate an interest in trail programs on the part of the States and local governments. This would be done both by actively including these bodies in the establishment of the trail as well as having the trail serve as a model designed to proper standards and managed consistent with environmental principles. Designation of the trail would thereby enhance the establishment of the national system of recreational and scenic trails instituted by Congress when it passed the National Trails System Act of 1968.

Lastly, it was found that designation and programmed development of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would not involve the expenditure of recreation funds and manpower in excess of that which will be needed as we proceed into the coming decades. Recreation pressures and needs will continue to increase at an accelerating rate, with no diminishment in sight. To fill these needs, new areas and facilities must continually be made available to the American public. The proposed national scenic trail would be a facility designed to provide such additional recreational opportunities.

Specific Findings

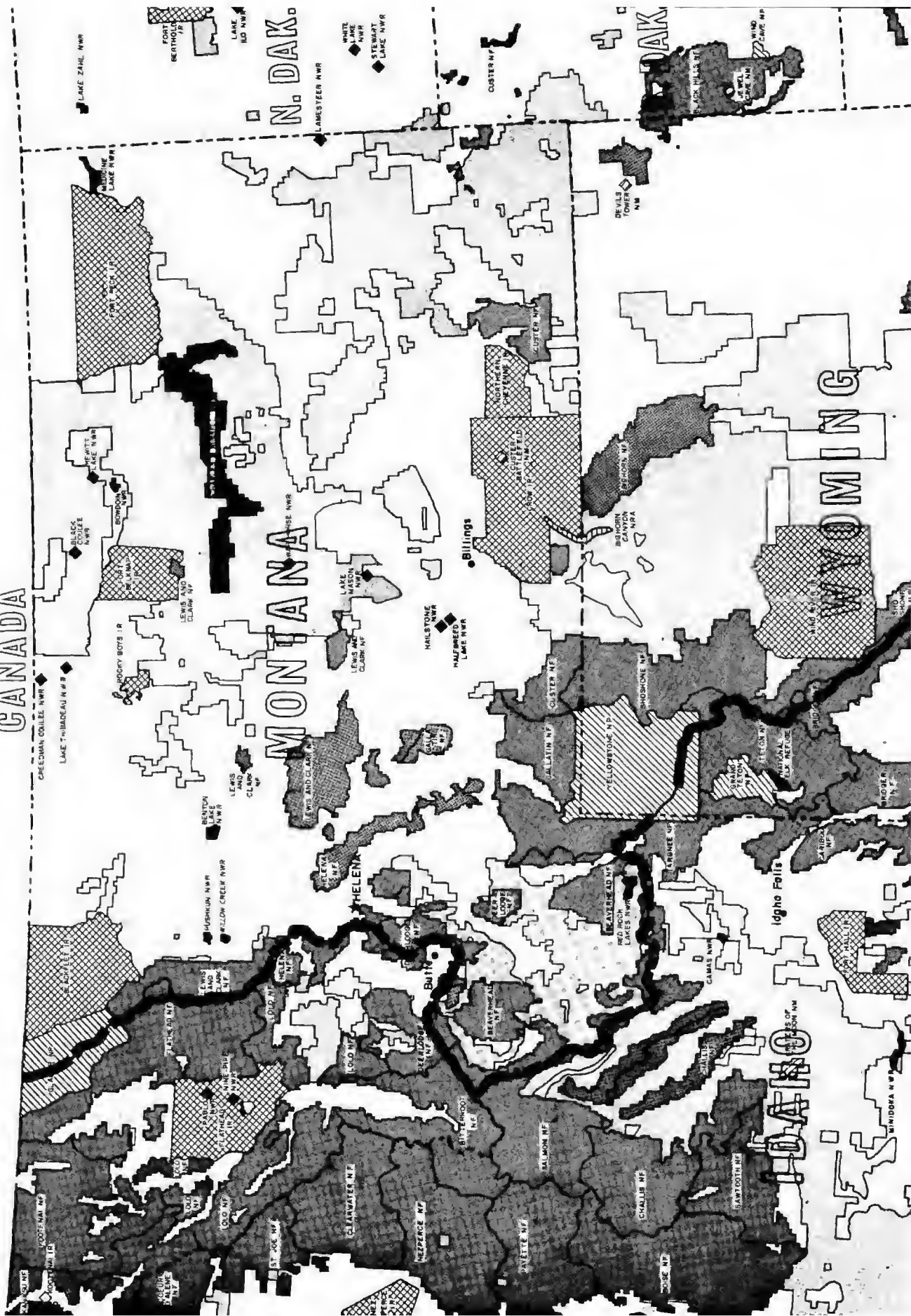
Trail Alignment

It has been determined that a trail attempting to hold to the actual spine of the Continental Divide would be totally undesirable due to its hazardous character, narrow recreation appeal, extremely high costs, and because of the gross alteration of the natural environment which such an alignment would necessitate. It was thus concluded that the most suitable route for a trail - still befitting its name - would be as close to the Continental Divide as circumstances permit but as far away as necessary to provide a safe trail which could be environmentally and economically justified and which would possess a general recreation appeal.

For many of the same reasons, the establishment of a totally new trail is also considered undesirable. The approach taken in the selection of the trail alignment for the Continental Divide Trail was, therefore, to include as many existing trails, primitive roads and other developed rights-of-way as possible so long as they met certain basic criteria and, where necessary, to recommend their improvement to national scenic trail standards.

The following map indicates the most feasible alignment for the Continental Divide Trail based on these initial considerations. Land ownership and existing travelways are also shown. The Continental Divide Trail would adhere to the actual Continental Divide in comparatively few locations. It would coincide with the Divide for only 600 miles of its total length (principally in its extreme northern and southern sectors) and depart from it by as much as 30 miles. It would, however, pass back and forth across the Continental Divide some 475 times, tying together and following suitable existing trails located on either side.

CANADA



N. DAK.

WYOMING

IDAHO

GLACIER NF

SELKIRK NF

YELLOWSTONE NM

GLACIER NP

GLACIER NP

GLACIER NP

GLACIER NP

GLACIER NP

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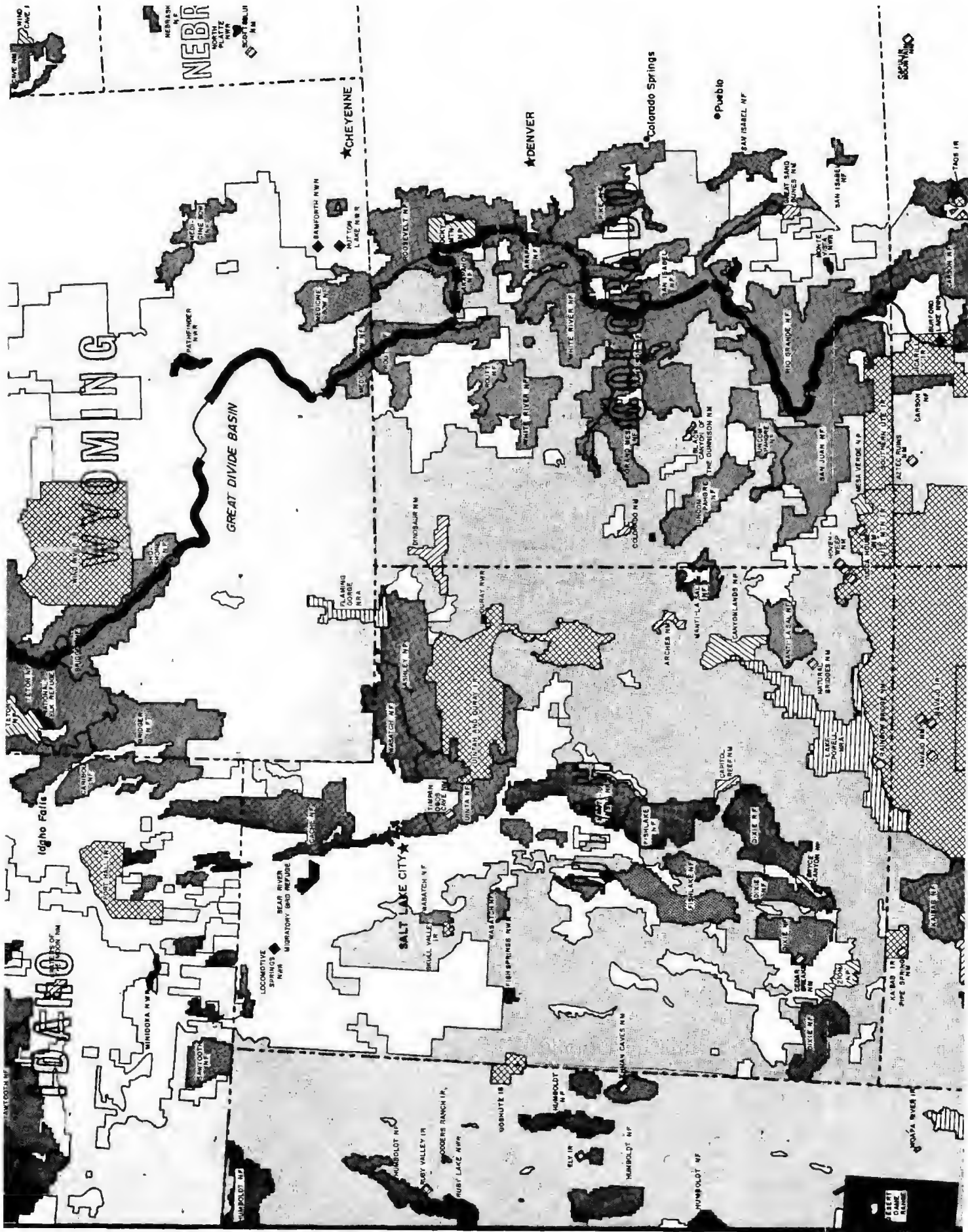
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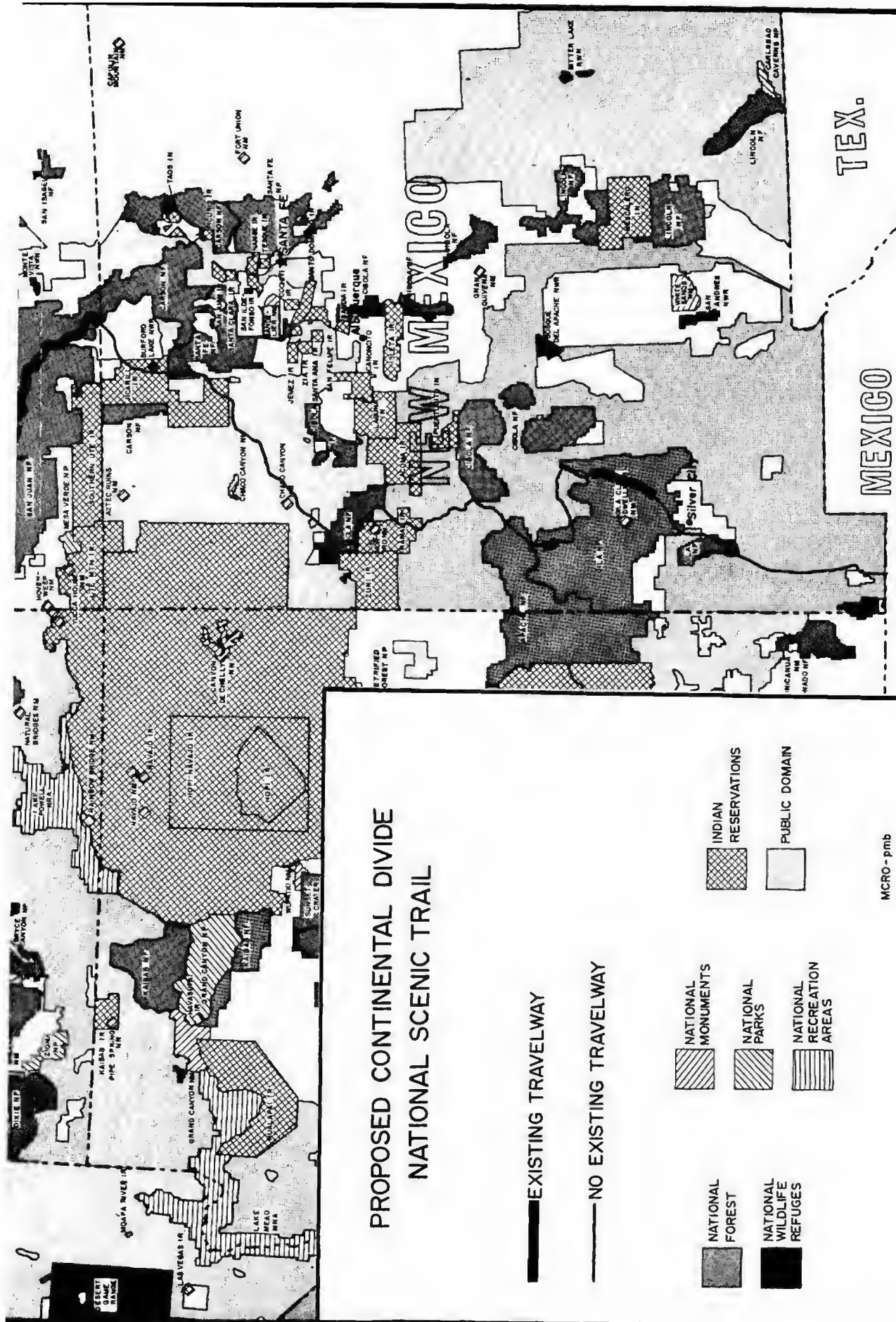
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PROPOSED CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

— EXISTING TRAVELWAY

- - - NO EXISTING TRAVELWAY

- NATIONAL FOREST
- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES
- NATIONAL MONUMENTS
- NATIONAL PARKS
- NATIONAL RECREATION AREAS
- INDIAN RESERVATIONS
- PUBLIC DOMAIN

MCRO - pmb

In so doing a Continental Divide Trail is now found to be 62 percent in place (no less than 88 percent in the States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Colorado, but only 7 percent in New Mexico). It would be approximately 3,100 miles in length and be located 82 percent on Federal lands (a high of 94 percent in Idaho and Montana and a low of 50 percent in New Mexico).

Right-of-Way Acquisition

A Continental Divide Trail could be designated largely on Federal lands. However, for a continuous trail, rights-of-way would have to be provided across certain private lands, State and locally-owned lands and Indian Trust lands. A total of 570 linear miles of trail across non-Federal land would be involved in the Continental Divide Trail, concentrated largely along the Continental Divide within the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming and the mountains and range lands of western New Mexico.

In keeping with Section 7(e) of the National Trails System Act the lands involved in such rights-of-way would need to be acquired in fee only if other methods of public control are not possible or are not sufficient for the purposes of their designations as segments of the national scenic trail. Preferably the necessary rights-of-way could be acquired by means of cooperative agreements with landowners, land exchange, acquisition of easements and other means involving less than fee title.

Trail Development Standards

Establishment of the trail should recognize the need for flexible standards to accommodate different kinds of terrain and varying kinds and degrees of use. Sufficient latitude is also desirable in order to allow the development and operation of the trail to agree with established management objectives of the agencies and interests administering areas along the trail. It is, however, advocated that the most minimal development standards consistent with these circumstances be employed. In keeping with the national scenic trails concept the trail should be regarded as a simple facility for the hiker and horseman.

Across certain of the more lightly used and open range lands, establishment of the trail would involve little more than directional marking and with little or no actual tread development. At the other end of the spectrum the initial development or upgrading of trails which combine rugged terrain, erosive elements and heavy user traffic require higher engineering standards commensurate with those conditions. The advisability of keeping long-range maintenance needs and costs to a minimum also has a strong bearing on the selection of construction standards.

The trail would, however, have minimal standards respecting tread width, clearances, and other dimensional factors. General standards would include a tread width of 18 to 24 inches with a maximum unobstructed pathway ten feet high and seven feet wide. These suggest the development of "well engineered game trails," and over their greater length this would aptly describe the planned makeup of the proposed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.

In addition to the actual travelway, the trail should be developed with a system of trailheads and intermediate rest stops to provide initial access to the trail and to accommodate the users while enroute. There would be 142 of the former and 69 of the latter required.

Both kinds of facilities would vary in size and makeup according to type and extent of use, but their development would be based upon certain general criteria: (1) there would be none provided in wilderness or primitive areas, (2) elsewhere facilities would be at least several hundred yards off the main trail in an effort to preserve the immediate environment of the trail, (3) they would be spaced roughly a day's travel apart, (4) existing recreation sites would be expanded or improved to serve these purposes wherever feasible, (5) as a rule they would be primitive in nature while providing water, sanitation, overnight camping, and other essential needs, and (6) they would not be equipped with shelters which are considered both unnecessary and undesirable.

Motorized Recreational Vehicular Use

National Scenic Trails are intended to be established primarily for hiking and horseback riding; motorized vehicular use is specifically prohibited by the National Trails System Act. In this regard the land administering agency trail

planners and this report recommend the inclusion of approximately 424 miles of existing primitive road rights-of-way in the proposed alignment of the Continental Divide Trail. Most are so primitive in nature that they would offer a recreational experience little different in quality from that where motorized vehicles are excluded. In some national forest areas, and in particular in Montana, these "roads" are no more than the two tracks created by the wheels of a rancher's vehicle used occasionally to take salt, etc., to his stock summering in the forest. Such occasional vehicular use of the trail is provided for in the Act.

This report recommends a Continental Divide Trail routing that coincidentally uses primitive road rights-of-way such as along the east rim of the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming. The use of some 218 miles of lightly used road rights-of-way in the Basin was deemed to be justified because (1) the east rim was considered the best of two alternative routes, (2) the subject road rights-of-way are existing, (3) their use would be economical, (4) motorized use of these roads is very light and would have minimal adverse effect on hikers or horseback riders, and (5) the anticipated hiker-horseback use for this segment of trail is relatively small. This precedent is already well established on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Therefore, Congress may wish to specifically recognize such coincidental use in any legislation establishing the trail. This, of course, should be subject to the following: the trail managing agency must find that such use would not impair the values for which the trail was established; that such use would not pose damage to natural and environmental values; that such use would not constitute a safety hazard to hikers or horseback riders; that such use would be compatible with other management objectives for the areas; and finally, the Advisory Council to the trail should deem it appropriate.

Trail Use and Economic Benefits

Overall use of the Continental Divide Trail has been estimated at about 690,000 visitor days per annum. This level of use has been projected to occur some 10 to 15 years following anticipated completion.

Established trends and patterns of trail use should not materially change as a result of national designation. In general, the greatest levels of use would be expected where the potential is already high - those segments in close proximity to population centers and in some of the more noted

tourist destination areas. On this basis the highest levels of use have been projected for the Colorado Rockies adjacent to the heavily populated Front Range and Glacier National Park. It is believed that the rate of use on more remotely located segments of the Continental Divide Trail would not be materially affected by virtue of national trail designation and that these segments should continue to experience more or less normal increases in use.

Establishment and recreational use of the proposed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would result in significant economic benefits to the communities and regions along the trail. The benefits would evolve from direct expenditures for goods and services by the recreationists using the trail, particularly by the overnight user, and indirectly by expenditures resulting from the expansion of services and facilities which would be enhanced by the establishment of the trail. The growth of supporting recreation oriented businesses would expand local and State tax bases, which it is believed would be far in excess of any losses in revenue from any lands which might be taken off tax rolls in establishing the trails.

Relation to Other Land Uses

Establishment of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would not significantly affect the use and management of the lands over which it passes. With respect to federally administered areas, establishment would be compatible with the purposes and management of national parks, national recreation areas, national forests and public domain lands. The plan contained elsewhere in this report relating to the establishment policies is considered to harmonize with and complement existing multiple-use plans on Federal lands.

The relationship of the trail to wilderness-type lands in national forests and national parks is worthy of special mention. The legislative histories of both the Wilderness Preservation Act and the National Trails System Act seem to indicate that a National Scenic Trail designation in wilderness areas is an appropriate aspect of both public programs. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, for example, authorized by the National Trails System Act, traverses 17 wilderness and wilderness candidate areas.

These facts notwithstanding, it was considered advisable to determine if similar areas along the Continental Divide Trail could be crossed on existing trails. Foot and horseback trails are of traditional importance in the management and use of wilderness and in many cases these roadless areas actually have more complex systems of trails than adjacent areas. These circumstances make it possible to designate existing trails in entirety through all but one of the 16 national forest wilderness and primitive areas as well as through Rocky Mountain National Park. Five miles of new trail development would be required in the Weminuche Wilderness Area in southwest Colorado, while in Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, 17 and 24 miles, respectively, of new trail would be needed.

The trail should also have little effect on present or future uses of non-Federal lands. Most non-Federal lands are located in areas of open range, with lesser amounts of woodland involved at higher elevations. The principal use of these lands is for domestic livestock grazing with commercial logging, mining and other uses being secondary. On State-owned and Indian Trust lands, developments for outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife are also becoming important features in their management.

Costs

The capital cost of establishing the Continental Divide Trail has been estimated at \$26.0 million. A breakdown of these costs is as follows:

Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$ 2,101,000
New Trail Development	7,875,000
Upgrading Existing Trails	11,667,000
Marking of Suitable Trails	91,000
Facility Development	4,246,000

Operation and maintenance costs have been estimated at \$830,000 annually upon complete establishment of the trail.

Funding and Programming

The above costs are known to be in excess of the monies now available in Federal agency budgets for such purposes. Were the establishment of the trail to receive authorization without funding above and beyond current funding levels it would not be possible to develop the route to sound criteria nor to adhere to the necessary high standards of operation and maintenance. On the other hand, higher national recreation priorities -- namely, those relating to our overriding urban needs as well as to the preservation of threatened resource areas -- perhaps tend to work against the probability of making sufficient amounts of money available for the immediate establishment of this essentially rural trail. The trail plan therefore calls for development in phases extending over a 30-year period. Priority for funding and manpower expenditures would be given to those segments which are accessible to large population centers and within certain tourist destination centers. On this basis the highest priority has been assigned to the Colorado Rockies adjacent to populous Front Range area and Glacier National Park. More remote or less attractive segments would be activated in later phases largely in accordance with their anticipated use.

Another funding and programming alternative would be for other than Federal interests to take an active and direct part in the establishment, operation and maintenance of the trails. If the trail is authorized, the various States, local governments and Indian tribes should be encouraged to assume these responsibilities on segments of trail of particular interest to them.

The section of this report concerning trail administration suggests specific areas in which the States of Colorado and New Mexico and the Jicarilla Apache, Off-Reservation Navajo and Ramah-Navajo Indians might participate in trail implementation. Presumably, trail planning, acquisition, and development projects sponsored by these entities would qualify for financial assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other Federal assistance programs.

Administration and Coordination

Inasmuch as the Forest Service controls the greatest amount of land along the Continental Divide Trail, it is believed that the Secretary of Agriculture should have overall responsibility for its administration. This should be done in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior who also has significant jurisdiction along the route of the trail.

The successful implementation of the trail plan would require the consideration of a great many interests relating to the manner in which it is established, operated and maintained. These interests include the public land managing agencies, the private landowner, economic user groups, Indian tribes, State and local governments, trail user groups, conservation and environmentally-oriented groups, as well as the ordinary citizen. All have a stake in the trail and should have a role in its administration.

Accordingly, if the trail is authorized it is felt that it should be accompanied by the creation of an advisory council similar to those created for the Pacific Crest and Appalachian National Scenic Trails. The purpose of the advisory council would be to promote the coordination of all the various interests and to advise and counsel the Secretary charged with administration of the trail on matters pertaining to its establishment.

Environmental Controls

One of the primary purposes for establishing the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would be to provide hiking and horseback access to those lands where man's impact on the environment has not been adverse to a substantial degree and where the environment remains relatively unaltered. Therefore, the protection of the land resource must remain a paramount consideration in establishing and managing the trail. There

must be sufficient environmental controls to assure that the values for which the trail is established are not jeopardized. To this end, this report contains numerous findings relating to trail feasibility and desirability specifically designed to protect the trail environments along the Continental Divide.

First, the trail would be designed to the most simple, yet high quality standards for the hiker and horseman. No gross or significant alteration of the land, vegetation or other resource values is envisioned. None is needed or desired.

Similarly, the proposed complementary facilities such as trailheads would be designed to provide only basic services oriented solely to the trail user. Wherever possible they would be located at or near existing recreational facilities or existing manmade intrusions on the landscape, such as road crossings. They would be spaced so as to minimize or avoid congestion, overuse and adverse impact.

Third, the report notes that substantial additional funding would ultimately be required to properly develop, and even more importantly, operate and maintain the trail. Public officials responsible for trail designation will undoubtedly note the required expenditures,- if it appears that the public may not want to allocate the needed financial resources for this purpose the advisability of designation as a national scenic trail should be given serious consideration.

Fourth, the suggested alignment of the proposed trail maximizes the use of existing trailways and the report recommends that where necessary these existing trails be upgraded, operated and maintained to minimum standards, consistent with environmental concerns. In this manner, the impact of new trail would be reduced and the impact of existing trail would be lessened by management to adequate standards.

Fifth, this report recommends the establishment of a Trail Council, with public and private representatives to oversee trail development and management. This Council would serve as a focal point where citizens interested in possible adverse environmental impact might address their concerns and where action could be taken to redress any possible adverse impacts.

Sixth, the report recommends trail designation consistent with the established land management policies for the protection of wilderness, primitive, and natural lands. No provisions of legislation establishing the trail should in any manner affect the provisions of those acts establishing the National Wilderness Preservation System and our national parks and national forests. The most restrictive provisions, determined by the land managing agencies to be appropriate, should apply.

Seventh, the report recognizes that the land managing agencies must retain full authority to control, curtail or eliminate any trail use where necessary for the protection of environmental values. In this regard, trail designation would not restrict the prerogatives of the land managing agencies concerned with protection of natural areas.

Lastly, this report recognizes that the most important environmental control will always be public concern for the management of our public lands and recreation areas, including trails.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The 3,100-mile route from Canada to Mexico proposed in this report be designated as the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, with the designated trail being limited initially to those segments of trail already in existence on Federal lands.
2. No new major trail developments be undertaken along the Continental Divide Trail route until higher priority needs in the vicinity are met, i.e., the upgrading of existing trails and development of new loop trails to meet the more immediate recreation needs of population and recreation destination centers near the Continental Divide.
3. Responsibility for overall administration and details of trail alignment rest with the Secretary of Agriculture, with continued management of segments by the respective State and Federal agencies and Indian tribes having jurisdiction over the lands involved.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Continental Divide Trail

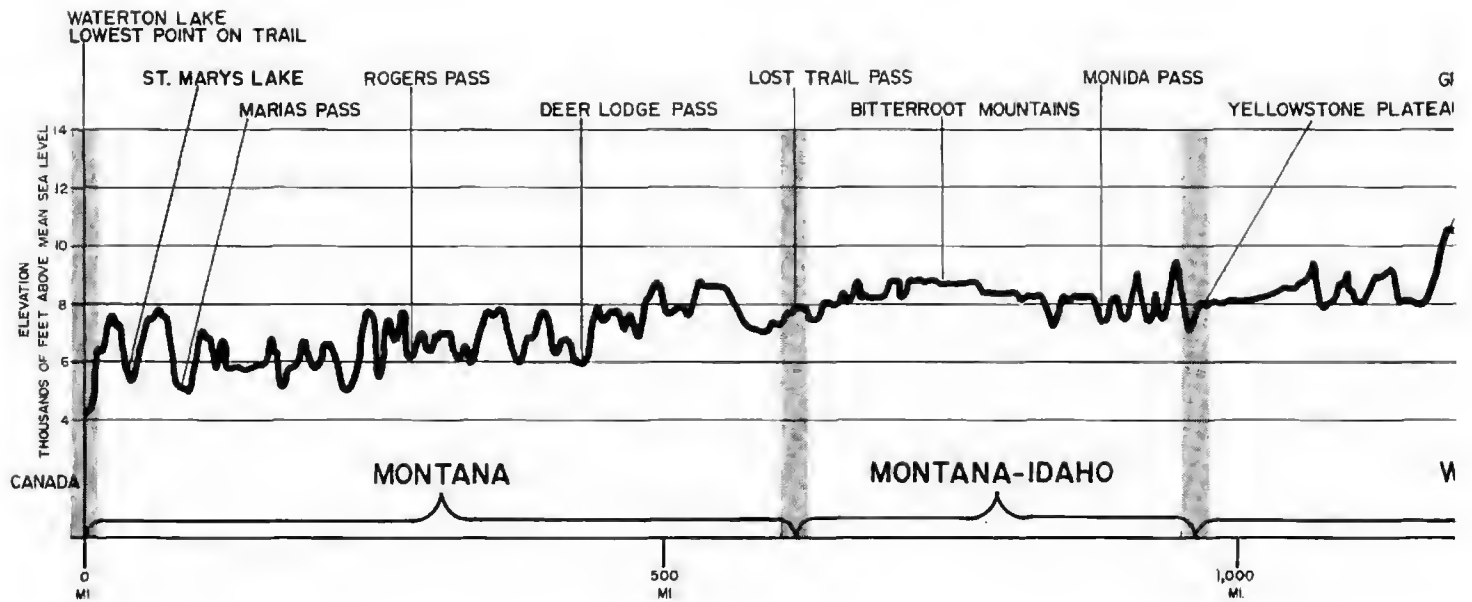
The Continental Divide is one of the Nation's most prominent topographic features. Here on the backbone of the North American Continent occurs the separation of major drainage patterns, with western slope rivers ultimately flowing to the Pacific Ocean and eastern slope rivers draining to the Atlantic.

The Divide is best known for being the crestline of the Rocky Mountains which suggests a continuous chain of ridges and peaks. This is not entirely the case, however, and the Divide is actually comprised of a series of separate mountain ranges interrupted by wide gaps of lower, nearly level semi-desert or lofty rolling plateaus. Yellowstone National Park and the area known as the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming typify the latter.

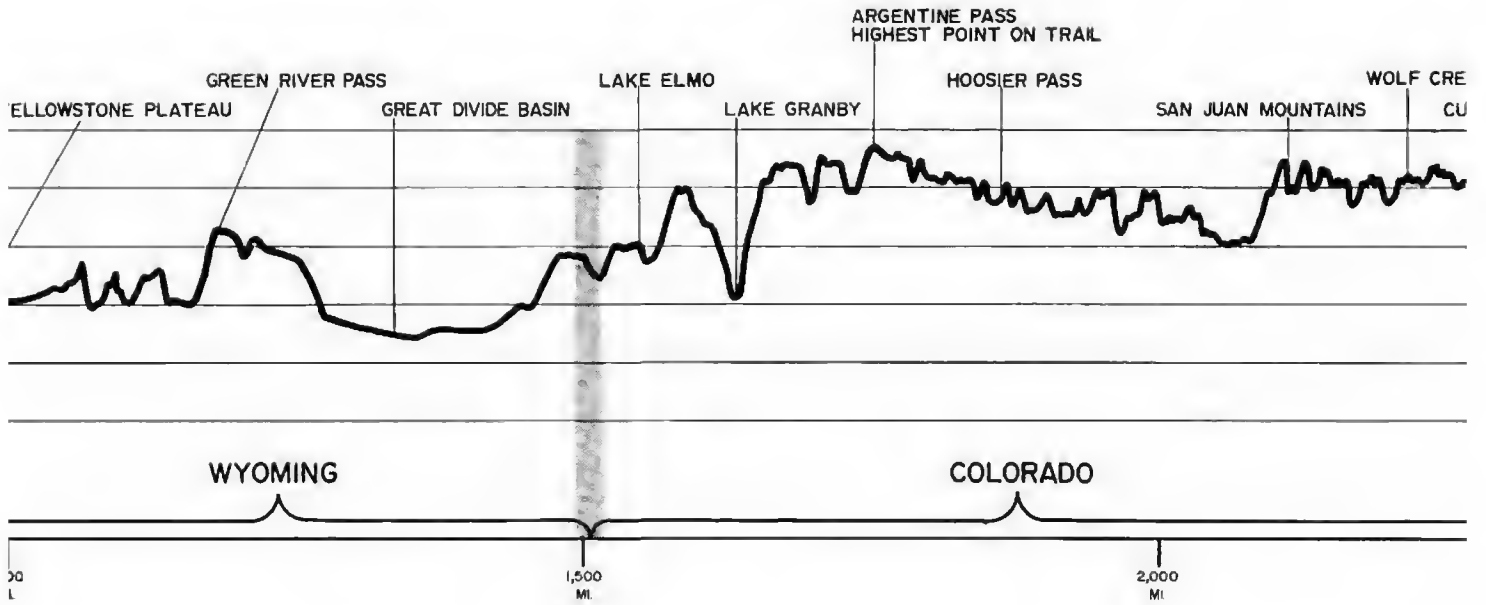
The trail experience on or near the Divide is an intimate one, for one can walk or ride horseback across vast fields of wild-flowers and contemplate a story dating from the dawn of earth's history. This story began when a portion of the earth was thrust upward, creating the sharp precipitous peaks that were sculptured into rich land forms leaving sparkling lakes, crystal-clear streams, and myriads of cascading waterfalls. Along the way, the tranquility of the alpine meadows, verdant forests and semi-desert landscape overwhelms everyone who passes that way. The trail would provide the traveler his best encounter with the Continental Divide - its serenity and pure air - and would supply for every trail traveler some of the world's most sublime scenes. The trail route would pass through five States - bisecting four and generally following the boundary of two for a distance. The route would also afford views of about 50 peaks over 14,000 feet. Five Indian tribes make their homes along the proposed Divide route. Opportunities to visit Canada and Mexico at either end of this 3,100 mile route would lend an international flavor to the trail. The following figure shows an exaggerated topographic profile, approximate elevations and prominent reference points along the proposed Continental Divide Trail.

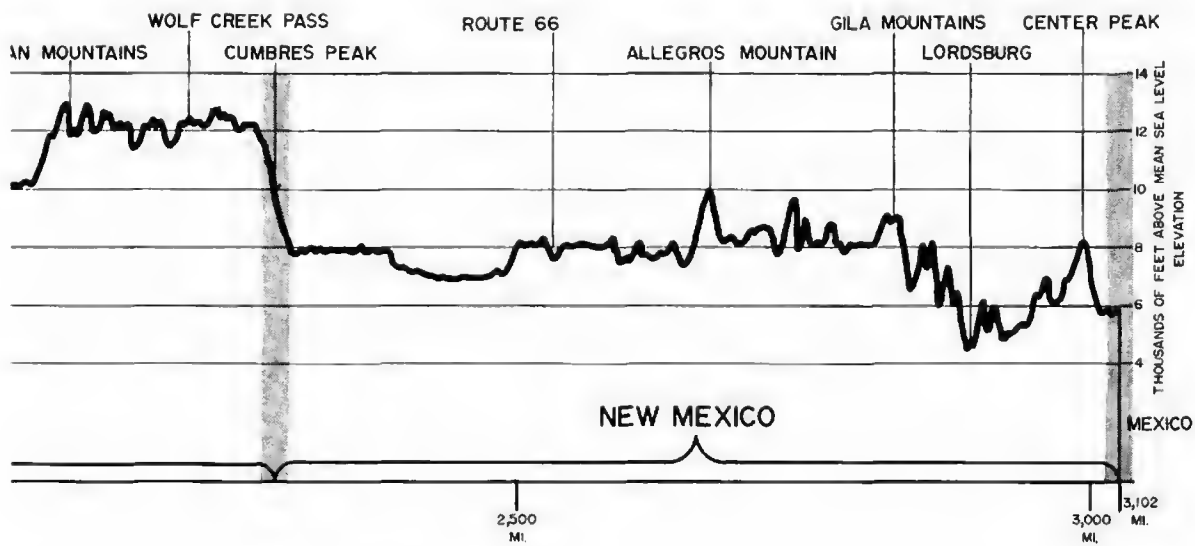
TRAIL TOPOGRAPHIC PROFILE

(VERTICAL EXAGGERATION 1:132)



CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL





The Continental Divide Trail hiker or rider would encounter a great variety of terrain, climate, and plant and animal life along the proposed route. Five ecological life zones, each containing a characteristic grouping of plants and animals, are found along the route. These are the (1) Lower Sonoran, (2) Upper Sonoran, (3) Transition, (4) Boreal, and (5) Arctic Alpine Life Zones. Each is a function of soil, slope, exposure and climate – temperature snow or rainfall and humidity.

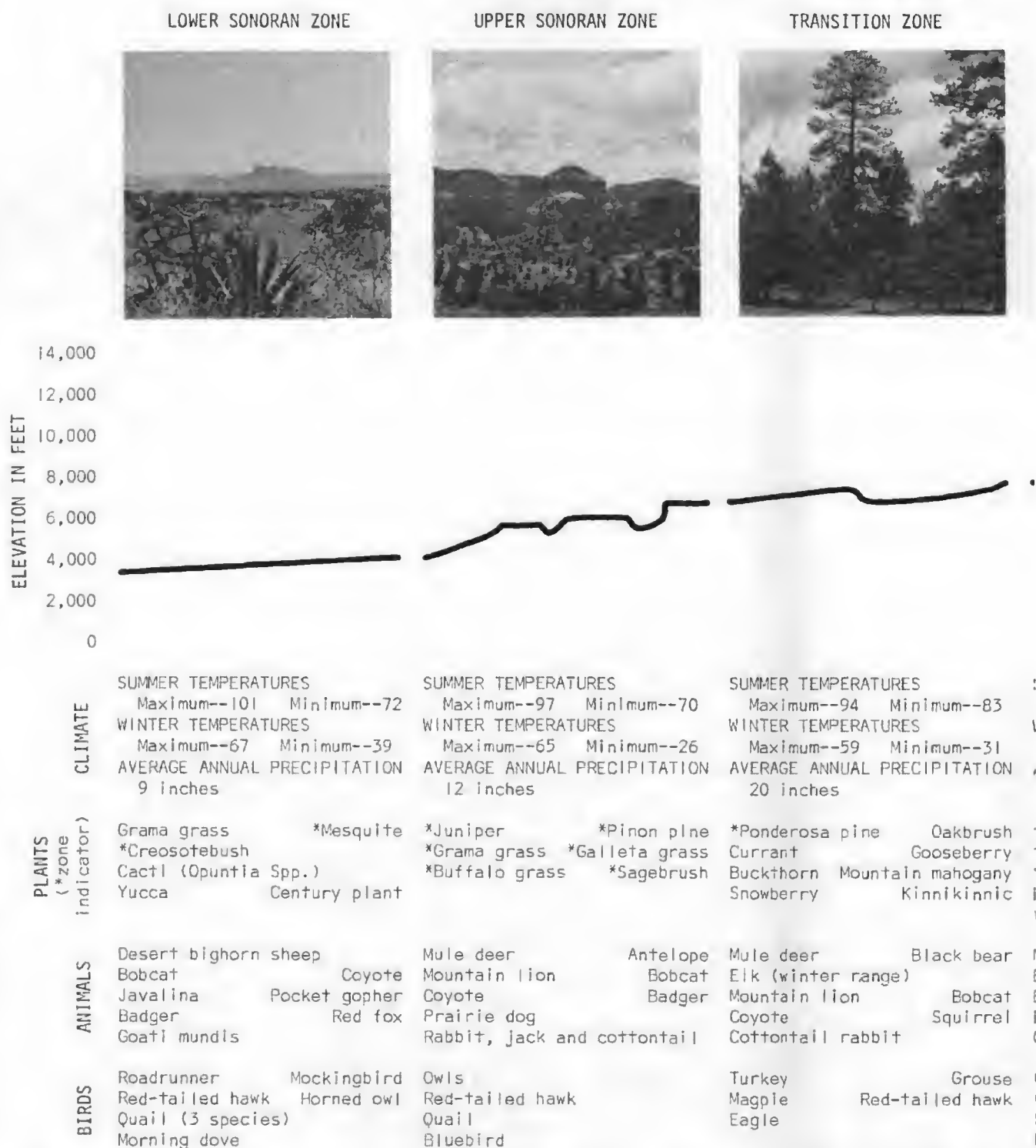
The figure on page 21 is a diagrammatic representation and general description of the life zones along the southern Continental Divide. Note that the range of elevations of the respective life zones decrease as one travels northward along the divide. The Boreal Life Zone, for example, generally occurs between 8,000 and 11,500 feet in elevation in New Mexico while in Glacier National Park in Montana this zone is found generally between 5,000 and 8,500 feet. Timberline starts in the upper elevations of this zone. Also worthy of note are the facts that the Lower Sonoran Life Zone is only found south of Lordsburg, New Mexico, but that each of the four other life zones is found in several locations along the remaining length of the Continental Divide depending upon variations in both latitude and elevation.

To help identify the more significant qualities, characteristics and trail opportunities of the proposed Continental Divide Trail, the following narrative describes the route in five major segments (1) the Canadian Border to South Pass, Wyoming, (2) South Pass to Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming, (3) Medicine Bow National Forest to Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation in New Mexico, (4) Jicarilla Indian Reservation to Silver City, New Mexico, and (5) Silver City to the Mexican Border.

U.S. - Canadian Boundary Through Montana and Idaho to South Pass, Wyoming

This 1,235-mile segment of the proposed trail is generally "mountain country" with a short use season because of a combination of elevation and northern latitude. Warm sunny days and chilly star-filled nights are the rule throughout the summer. Early season visitors find cascading waterfalls at their most glorious and the mountain peaks still covered with winter snow. In the fall, deciduous trees display brilliant colors, while the highest peaks glisten with their dusting of first snow and the skies darken to a startling blue.

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF T ALONG THE SOUTHERN CONTINENT



*Ranges of elevation for the various life zones decrease with increases in latitude along the Divide. Park in Montana occurs between 5,000 and 8,500 feet opposed to a range of between 8,000 and 11,500

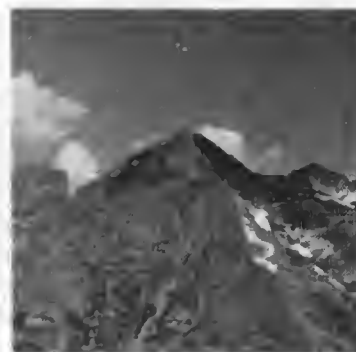
IC REPRESENTATION OF THE LIFE ZONES THE SOUTHERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE¹

AN ZONE

TRANSITION ZONE

BOREAL ZONE

ARCTIC-ALPINE ZONE



RES
Minimum--70
RES
Minimum--26
PRECIPITATION

SUMMER TEMPERATURES
Maximum--94 Minimum--83
WINTER TEMPERATURES
Maximum--59 Minimum--31
AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION
20 inches

SUMMER TEMPERATURES
Maximum--90 Minimum--60
WINTER TEMPERATURES
Maximum--56 Minimum--28
AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION
20 inches

SUMMER TEMPERATURES
Maximum--78 Minimum--44
WINTER TEMPERATURES
Maximum--45 Minimum--14
AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION
40 inches

*Pinon pine
Alfalfa grass
*Sagebrush

*Ponderosa pine
Currant
Buckthorn
Snowberry
Oakbrush
Gooseberry
Mountain mahogany
Kinnikinnic

*Douglas fir
*Lodgepole pine
*Englemann spruce
Bristlecone pine
Lamber pine
*Blue spruce
*Aspen

Lichens
Marsh marigolds
Dwarf primrose
Dwarf gentians
Dwarf forget-me-nots
Grass
Alpine sunflowers

Antelope
Bobcat
Badger
cottontail

Mule deer
Elk (winter range)
Mountain lion
Coyote
Cottontail rabbit
Black bear
Bobcat
Squirrel

Mule deer
Black and Grizzly bear
Bighorn sheep
Bobcat
Chipmunk
Elk
Mountain lion
Beaver
Squirrel

Pika
Conies
Marmot
Ptarmigan
Hawks
Eagles

Turkey
Magpie
Eagle
Grouse
Red-tailed hawk

Clark's nutcracker
Canada jay
Band-tailed pigeon
Mallard
Dusky grouse
Raven

¹ with increases in latitude along the Divide -- e.g., the Boreal Life Zone in Glacier National
closed to a range of between 8,000 and 11,500 feet in New Mexico.

Much of this trail segment would be typical of the Boreal Life Zone with its dominant flora of coniferous and deciduous trees. A substantial number of miles, however, would be above timberline where the alpine vegetation is made up of matlike plants characteristic of tundra, but lacking the permanently frozen subsoils of the true arctic.

The northern end of the trail would lie at the Canadian Border on the west shore of Waterton Lake in Glacier National Park - the United States portion of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.

Here in this northernmost section of the Montana Rockies, 200 glacial lakes stud the valley or are set like jewels in rocky cirques. The Park is not named for the 60-odd glaciers of today but for the huge ice age glaciers that carved this rugged wonderland a million years ago.

Easily accessible on foot or horseback - more than a thousand miles of trail lure the recreationist deep into this million acre alpine wonderland. The Continental Divide Trail would be the backbone of the park's trail system. It would offer a wide variety of options to those willing to sample the changing panorama of crystal clear waters, cascading waterfalls, sheer cliffs, glaciers, dense forests and fields of brilliant wild-flowers .

From Waterton Lake, the lowest elevation on the entire Continental Divide Trail, the proposed route would traverse southward through the Park for about 100 miles. Glacier National Park climaxes in 10,448-foot Mount Cleveland, which is but one of the Glacier's many high peaks. From the International Boundary, the trail parallels the lakeshore southward to the Waterton Ranger Station. Here a visitor center interprets the theme of the International Peace Park as well as some natural history of the surrounding area.

Traveling southward up the Waterton Valley, the trail would first wind through dense forest, then breaking out of the timber would start its climb toward Fifty Mountain. As the trail tops out on the west slope of Fifty Mountain, the traveler would cross truly beautiful alpine meadows surrounded by rugged peaks. There the trail would first intersect the Continental Divide. This section of existing trail known as the Highline Trail is above timberline, parallel to but just west of the Continental Divide.



Backpacking is a most enjoyable activity on the
Highline Trail in Glacier National Park.

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Pacific Northwest Region Photo

Proceeding southward through spectacular mountain scenery, the route would follow existing trail to Granite Park Chalet where the Garden Wall section of the Highline Trail extends south from the chalet to Logan Pass. The Garden Wall, a three- to four-mile-long narrow blade of rock is considered by many to be the most spectacular formation along the Divide in the Park. Grinnel Glacier lying at the east base of the Garden Wall is the second largest in the Park.

The National Park Service operates a visitor center at Logan Pass. A self-guiding nature trail featuring unusual alpine scenery leads south from the visitor center along the Continental Divide for a distance of two miles to Hidden Lake Overlook. There the existing trail along the Divide ends. At Logan Pass the proposed route turns eastward to parallel the Going-to-the-Sun Highway and descend to the existing St. Mary Lake Trail. About half way along the south shore of St. Mary Lake, the trail turns south toward Red Eagle Lake where fishing for large cutthroat and rainbow trout is usually good.

From Red Eagle Lake, the trail would ascend Hudson Bay Creek to Triple Divide Pass. Triple Divide Mountain is a unique focal point of the Continent's drainage. From its slopes, water drains to the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans.

The trail would continue on to Pitamakin Pass where an existing trail closely follows the Continental Divide until reaching Dawson Pass. This section of trail provides beautiful views of Old Man Lake. At Dawson Pass, the scenery is also spectacular with sweeping views of many peaks and glaciers. New trail should eventually be constructed between Dawson Pass and Firebrand Pass in the southernmost part of the park. Until that connection is made, existing trail can be used that loops away from the Divide to East Glacier in the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

From East Glacier the Continental Divide Trail would swing southwest and re-enter Glacier National Park. Climbing steadily to the Railroad Creek Basin, it would again reach the Continental Divide at Three Bears Lake and Marias Pass.

Mile-high Marias Pass, the lowest Continental Divide pass north of Lordsburg, New Mexico, was often used by Indians traveling from the Blackfeet Nation to the Flathead and Kootenai Nations. Marias Pass was probably first crossed by white men in 1810 when Finan McDonald, Baptista Buch, and Michael Bourdeaux accompanied by 150 Flathead Indians crossed the pass in search of bison. Their trip was cut short by a battle with the Blackfeet.

Near Marias Pass the trail leaves Glacier National Park and enters national forest lands. There are parking facilities and a Forest Service campground on the pass.

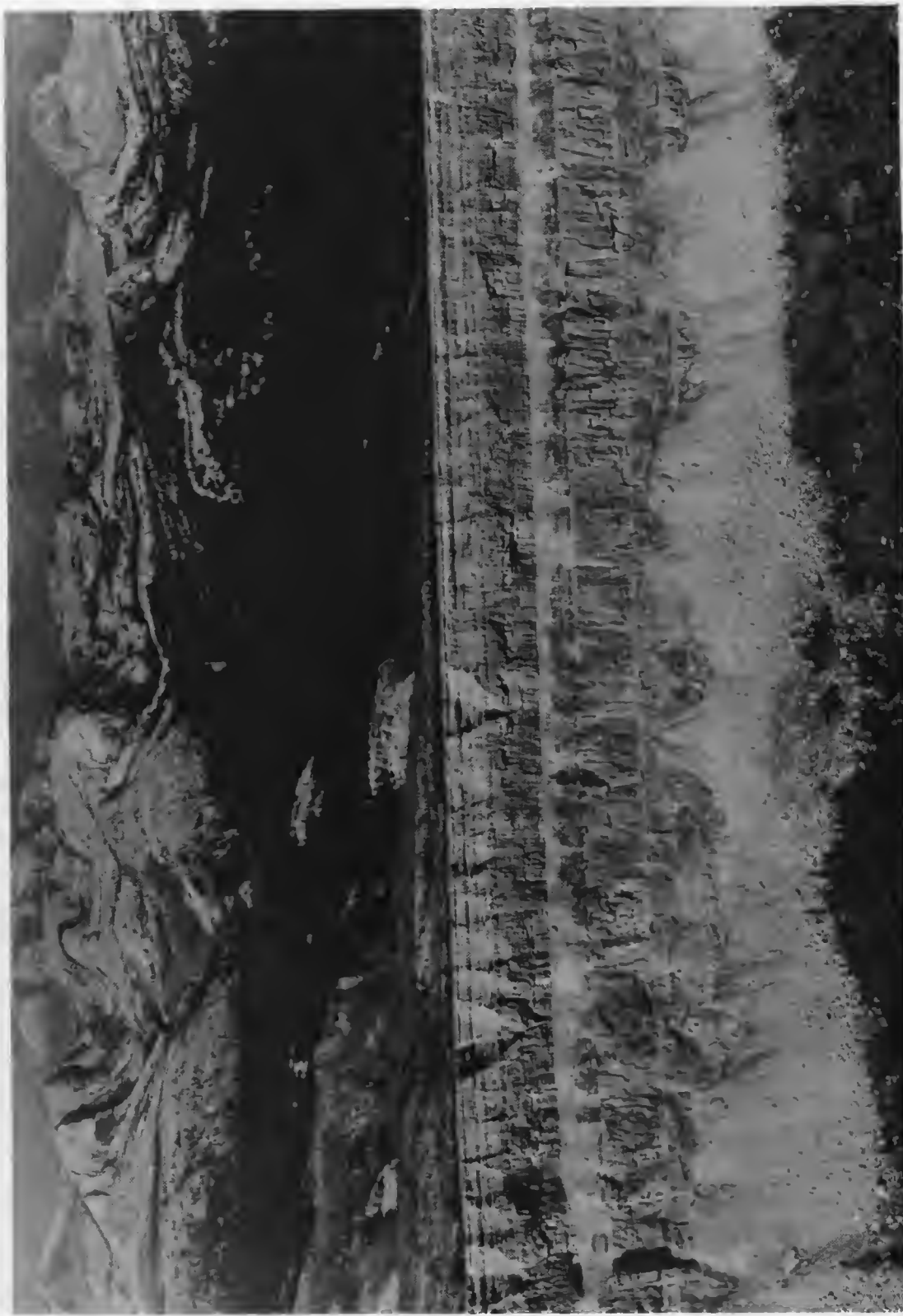
From Marias Pass, the proposed trail would continue southward for 40 miles through portions of the Flathead and Lewis and Clark National Forests before it enters the 950,000-acre Bob Marshall Wilderness. There it would travel for 100 miles on existing trail. This area, second largest Federal wilderness in the United States, is bigger than the state of Rhode Island. This wilderness offers solitude and recreation for a variety of tastes: trails for hiking and horseback riding, an unlimited variety of subjects for photography, excellent fishing, a multitude of bird voices, excellent opportunities to observe both large and small wild animals, ski touring, snowshoeing, mountain climbing, rock and fossil collecting, interesting geology for study.

After passing Beaver Lake, just inside the wilderness boundary, the trail would proceed through Badger, Sun River, and Switchback Passes. Just northeast of Switchback Pass, fossils of trilobites can be found on Kevan Mountain. These 2-inch long arthropods inhabited the earth 200 to 300 million years ago.

The trail would then follow Pentagon Creek and Spotted Bear River and again cross the Continental Divide at Spotted Bear Pass. This is some of the best elk country in the United States. Unlike Glacier National Park, hunting is allowed on most of the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

South of Spotted Bear Pass, the route would be on the east side of the Chinese Wall. An outstanding feature of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the Chinese Wall is a 12-mile long, 1,000-foot high escarpment along the Continental Divide. The Wall is the result of a thrust fault, with its cliffs made up of Cambrian limestone. The Chinese Wall is the longest section of continuous cliff formation in the Rocky Mountains. In the spring, blooming bear grass forms a sea of white in the meadows on the east side of the wall. Bighorn sheep are common in this area, and mountain goats can be seen on the cliffs along the Chinese Wall. Grizzly and black bear, elk, moose, deer, and cougar are other large animals found in the wilderness.

The route leaves the Bob Marshall Wilderness at Dry Fork-Flathead Divide and travels through the Lincoln-Scapegoat Back Country for approximately 45 miles in the Lolo and Helena National Forests.



The Chinese Wall - An outstanding feature of the Divide
in the Bob Marshall Wilderness between the Flathead and Lewis and Clark National Forests, Montana

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, PNW Region Photo

In the Helena National Forest, the traveler would wander back and forth across the Continental Divide, following an existing trail to the vicinity of Lewis and Clark Pass. In 1806, Captain Meriwether Lewis crossed this pass on his return trip to the east. The Lewis and Clark expedition had split into two groups to permit exploration of two different routes used by the Indians crossing the Continental Divide.

Continuing southward, the Continental Divide route is characterized for many miles by rounded, timber-covered mountains. This area is rich in mining history, and the trail passes near the old mining towns of Gould and Marysville. Marysville boasted a population of more than 5,000 from 1885 to 1889. The famed Drumlunnon gold mine opened here in 1876, and more than \$50 million in gold was dug from the nearby mountain. Only about 50 people now live in Marysville.

There are several other ghost towns near the proposed trail, and considerable evidence of mining and prospecting activity. Ophir Cave, a large natural underground complex, is two miles from the route.

Leaving the Marysville area, the trail crosses Mullan Pass before reaching McDonald Pass, the route of U.S. 12. Here the country is gently rolling with alternately open and forested hillsides. A wagon road was completed across the Continental Divide at Mullan Pass in 1862 by Captain John Mullan. The road was constructed to connect Fort Benton, Montana, on the Missouri River with Fort Spokane, Washington, on the Spokane River.

Continuing south from McDonald Pass, the country steepens as the trail approaches Thunderbolt Mountain. Still farther south, the country again becomes less precipitous as the trail leaves the Divide to skirt to the east of Butte, Montana.

The Treasure State's Anaconda-Butte-Helena area is world-famous for its mining. Near Butte, there is a large open pit copper mine with an observation point and free conducted tours. Tours of underground mines are also available. Anaconda is the location of one of the largest non-ferreous smelters in the world. It handles the whole output of copper ore from the Butte District. The discovery of copper at Butte Hill in the 1880's resulted in one of the world's most notorious mining camps. Butte sprawls a mile high on the Continental Divide, along the side of "the richest hill on earth." Butte's roaring history peaked in the era of the 1890's when the copper kings battled for control of the "hill."

After circling Butte, the trail would again join the Divide at Homestake Pass south of the city and strike southward past Pipestone Pass, the site of a historic route from Corriner, Utah, to Butte, to Deer Lodge Pass.

Beyond Deer Lodge Pass, one would travel through typical lodgepole pine country, leave Deer Lodge National Forest land cross open grazing land in the vicinity of Mill Creek Pass. During the early days, cordwood from California Creek was once flumed through this pass to smelters in Anaconda. Continuing onward, the trail would approach a fire lookout station on Grassy Mountain and would re-enter the Deer Lodge National Forest north of Tenmile Lakes, scenic mountain lakes just east of the Anaconda-Pintlar Wilderness.

Southward, the Continental Divide Trail stretches through the Anaconda-Pintlar Wilderness for 50 miles, crossing and recrossing the Divide while traversing the Beaverhead, Deerlodge, and Bitterroot National Forests. The trail enters the 157,800-acre wilderness near Mount Tiny. The Anaconda Range, the wilderness backbone is a true sierra whose high, barren and precipitous peaks are flanked by ice-carved amphitheaters. Glaciation formed the many spectacular cirques, U-shaped valleys and glacial moraines in the foothills. Sparkling streams, fed by the perpetual snowbanks above timberline, tumble down steep canyons from high mountain meadows. There are numerous lakes, alpine forests, and meadows. The Sapphire Range with lower mountains and gentle slopes, joins the Anaconda Range on the northwest.

Near Phlox and Violet Lakes the trail would leave the wilderness. Several miles later, the route would parallel the Divide near Gibbons Pass and cross Trail Creek. This country is gently rolling with a thick covering of trees. Trail Creek was the route that Colonel John Gibbons followed in his futile attempt to arrest the flight of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians during the summer of 1877.

Big Hole Battlefield National Monument, the scene of the encounter between Gibbon's troops and the Indians, is 14 miles to the east. It preserves part of the major scene of battle along the route of the epic retreat, from present-day Idaho toward the Canadian Border, of five fleeing Nez Perce Indian bands during the summer of 1877. Here on August 9 and 10, occurred one of the more dramatic and tragic episodes during the long struggle in the United States to confine the Indians to designated reservations and force them off the land wanted by whites.



Upper Miner Lakes -
Typical of the hundreds of high alpine lakes along the Divide. Beaverhead National Forest, Montana

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, PNW Region Photo

Today, in the battlefield area, mute evidence in the form of trenches and battle-scarred trees still recalls one of the more fierce chapters of the nineteenth century Indian warfare. The monument, begun as a memorial to the soldiers who gave their lives here has become also a memorial to the fortitude of the Indians.

Southward the trail route would wander along the Divide to the Idaho-Montana State Line at Chief Joseph Pass. From here to Yellowstone National Park, the Continental Divide forms the boundary between the two States. The trail would cross back and forth across the Divide, following existing travelways for the most part. On the Montana side of the Divide, the trail would be on lands of the Beaverhead National Forest except for the area from Reynolds Pass to Yellowstone, which is on the Gallatin National Forest. The Idaho portions principally include the Salmon and Targhee National Forests and scattered tracts of public domain lands between Chief Joseph Pass and the vicinity of Monida Pass.

From Goldstone Pass south to Lemhi Pass, the trail would hold quite close to the Divide. Lemhi Pass has been used continuously since the beginning of recorded history in the west and has been declared a Registered National Historic Landmark.

During August 1805 Captain Lewis leading a small party in advance of the main Lewis and Clark expedition made their first crossing of the Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass on the present day boundary common to Montana and Idaho. Continuing their way westward they crossed Lost Trail Pass. On their 18.06 return trip the Captains separated at Traveler's Rest in the lower Bitterroot valley with Captain Clark recrossing the Divide at Gibbons Pass while Captain Lewis searched for a more direct route to the Great Falls of the Missouri.

South of Lemhi Pass, the route would follow an existing trail to Bannack Pass across country that is gentle and rolling with numerous open parks and lodgepole pine stands. Bannack Pass also figured heavily in Montana history. The ghost town of Bannack, Montana's first capital, is 35 miles northeast. The pass furnished the most direct route from Montana gold-fields to southern Idaho.

Bannack Pass was once a railroad route connecting Dillon, Montana, to the mines at Leadore and Gilmore, Idaho. There is still evidence of the old abandoned railroad tunnel under this pass. Bannack Pass is also significant as a historic route for herds of migrating buffalo. The once well-trammeled buffalo trails are now grown over but modern day finds of buffalo skulls bear witness to the earlier importance of this pass.

From Bannack Pass to Medicine Lodge Pass, the country is open and gently rolling. The route would follow mostly existing trails through much of this area, visiting numerous lakes along the way. From Medicine Lodge Pass to Monida Pass, the country takes on a more alpine setting characterized by sparse vegetation with ragged mountains falling away in all directions. The proposed Trail would pass near Red Conglomerate Peaks, a unique geological information and a nesting place for the rare golden eagle.

From Monida Pass, the route would remain on the south side of the Divide until passing near O'Dell Lake, close to the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. This 40,000-acre refuge lying on the north, or Montana side of the Divide is the home for the largest of all North American waterfowl, the trumpeter swan, and would be a highly worthwhile side trip for those traveling the proposed Continental Divide Trail.

Beyond O'Dell Lake, the trail would closely follow the Continental Divide eastward along the crest of the scenic Centennial Mountains past Taylor Mountain, where mining operations have uncovered ancient fossil beds. The trail would cross Red Rock Pass and continue on to Reynolds and Targhee Passes.

The interesting Earthquake Area of the Gallatin National Forest is eight miles north of Reynolds Pass. On August 7, 1959, a 125-square mile block of ground underlying Hebgen Lake dropped, warped, and tilted dramatically northward. Two other large fault blocks also dropped, setting off a series of earthquakes, some of the strongest recorded in America and causing a gigantic landslide that blocked Madison Canyon. The U. S. Forest Service has preserved this 37,800-acre geological area for study and interpretation. A visitor center has been erected in the slide area near Quake Lake.

Beyond Targhee Pass the trail would cross rolling, timber-covered hills, intersect Reas Pass, and traverse basically flat lodgepole pine country on its approach to Yellowstone National Park.

The 80 miles of trail through Yellowstone National Park would lead successively to Shoshone Lake, Lewis Lake, Yellowstone Lake (the highest large lake in North America), and across Two Ocean Plateau to the south park boundary.

The forests of Yellowstone National Park contribute to the aesthetics of this trail route. Aspen, Englemann Spruce, Douglas fir, alpine fir, whitebark, limber and lodgepole pine provide a pleasing backdrop for the photographer, protection to vital watersheds, shade for campgrounds, and home for wildlife.

Wildlife is possibly the greatest attraction for the Yellowstone trail visitor at every season of the year. One is apt to see moose, elk, buffalo, trumpeter swan, black and grizzly bear, beaver and possibly even marten, bobcat, otter and mink to mention only a few.

Side trails to famed thermal phenomena such as Old Faithful Geyser and those of Lower and Midway Geyser Basins could be made available from the Continental Divide Trail.

At Fox Park, where the Snake River crosses the south boundary of Yellowstone National Park, the trail would enter the Teton National Forest and for 75 miles traverse the more than 550,000-acre Teton Wilderness area.

A major attraction along the Continental Divide Trail route, the Teton Wilderness is an area of coniferous timber, waterfalls, wide meadows, lakes and streams and broad valleys. Along the Continental Divide, the visitor would traverse high alpine country where snowbanks are not uncommon in July. The highest point in the Teton National Forest is 12,165-foot Yount's Peak at the head of the Yellowstone River.

Highlights of a wilderness trip here might include a view of the Yellowstone Meadows, a mile wide and seven miles long, through which the Yellowstone River meanders. This is a favored location for spotting the majestic moose.

Two Ocean Pass is unusual because at this point on the Continental Divide, called "Parting of the Waters," Two Ocean Creek divides and sends one stream to the Pacific Ocean and the other to the Atlantic.

Another feature worth seeing would be the falls on the South Fork of the Buffalo River. The falls drop over 100 feet into a canyon less than 50 feet wide.

North of Upper Brooks Lake, the trail exits eastward from the Wilderness and into the Shoshone National Forest on the east side of the Divide. The trail would then drop down to Brooks Lake and back again to the Divide at Togwotee Pass. West of the Pass, the trail would again enter the Teton National Forest and for another 75 miles traverse the western slopes of the Divide.

Thousands of elk are scattered through this forest and are a treat to the traveler clever enough to see them. In winter the elk move to lower elevations and concentrate in large numbers in the Jackson Hole National Elk Refuge. Mule deer, too, are frequently spotted during a visit, and mountain sheep trails crisscross the sharp ridges and high peaks. Trail travelers should watch for sheep early in the morning and late in the evening. The Teton National Forest and Wilderness beckons the rifleman to one of the finest hunting grounds of the continent.

At Gun Site Pass, the proposed route would cross into the Bridger National Forest, and while following along the north shore of the Green River Lakes enter the Bridger Wilderness. In the Wilderness, the route would follow existing trail for 75 miles along the west slope of the Wind River Range. On the southern end of this range is 13,804-foot Gannett Peak, the highest point in Wyoming. Through the Wilderness the proposed route follows existing trails located several miles on the average distant from the actual crest of the Divide.

A venture into the Wind River country is an additional opportunity to step back into time. Geologists date these mountains to 70 million years ago. At that time terrific forces from within the earth pushed its crust into jagged masses, forming these mountains. A period of glaciation followed, and when the ice began to recede, it scraped the land surface forming great canyons while leaving spectacular spires, fertile meadows, more than a thousand small lakes, and numerous spring-fed streams.

The game fish of the Bridger Wilderness provide some of the best fishing in America. Trout species include the golden, rainbow, brown, brook, mackinaw, and cutthroat. The Montana grayling also inhabits several lakes and streams. Two and three pound fish are common.

After leaving the Wilderness, the trail would strike eastward across the remaining 10 miles of the Bridger National Forest and into the Shoshone National Forest for a short distance. Then on to South Pass City and the famed Continental Divide crossing of the historic Oregon Trail.

South Pass City, Wyoming to the North Boundary of the Medicine
Bow National Forest, Wyoming

The Wyoming Recreation Commission is currently restoring the historic site of South Pass City- Near here atop the Continental Divide, the "49ers" crossed South Pass in their rush westward to California over the Oregon Trail; it was here that some returned in the late 1860's to develop South Pass City as a gold mining town; it was here at Mrs. Esther Hobart Morris¹ tea party that the Women's Suffrage Bill was spawned to later be enacted by the State Legislature and to eventually become the model for national legislation - the 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. South Pass is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

After leaving the South Pass area, the Continental Divide Trail route would strike southeastward for 253 miles, traversing the desert-like reaches of southern Wyoming. In so doing it would incorporate the rights-of-way of rural-type roads, for some 218 miles - roads that closely follow or coincide with the Continental Divide in this area.

At Oregon Buttes the Continental Divide splits into east and west rims which rejoin at Bridger's Pass south of Rawlins, Wyoming and enclose the several million acre area known as the Great Divide Basin or Red Desert of Wyoming. Although the uninformed have written it off as Fremont did in calling it the "Great American Desert," the Great Divide Basin is a highly unique and interesting area. Topographically it is one of the few Continental Basins with no drainage to the outside.

In the December 4, 1970 issue of High Country News, a Wyoming Bi-Weekly, Jean Brigham, an out-of-state visitor, was quoted as follows about the Red Desert:

"The average tourist speeds through the desert country, and never stops to realize how truly beautiful it really is. I was one of the very fortunate ones who had a chance to 'live' in this desert (though for only a very short time) and to get to know how truly beautiful that part of the country is and the amount of wildlife it holds. I was there in the fall and saw many animals even then. In the summer it must truly become 'The Living Desert'.¹"



Bridger Wilderness -
Holds Elbow Lake near the crest of the Wind River Range in Bridger National Forest in Wyoming.

U.S. Forest Service, Intermountain Region Photo

Rockhunters can find jade, petrified wood and many other semi-precious stones that are scattered throughout the Basin. The Basin also has great archeological value due to evidence of pre-Columbian man. There are important Indian petroglyph sites.

The Basin is the ancestral home of thousands of pronghorn antelope and part of it has been proposed as a national antelope range.

It was also once home for buffalo, and Steamboat Mountain northeast of Rock Springs, Wyoming is reportedly the site of what was once a buffalo jump where Indians killed hundreds of the great animals by herding them over steep cliffs.

Wild horses have run in the Basin as long as horses have been associated with Wyoming. They add greatly to that aura of the wild west that is Wyoming. Different, yes - uninviting no, the Basin has a stark beauty of its own. This is truly big, open country and from the rims one can see 75 or more miles. Because it is considered more scenic, the eastern rim of the Basin was chosen as the route of the trail. The western rim may be developed later as a connector trail.

Except for the Boreal Life Zone of Crooks, Green and Ferris Mountains, this area is typical of the Upper Sonoran Life Zone and contains sage-grassland country which has served as winter range for millions of Wyoming cattle and sheep.

What rain occurs, falls primarily during the period of May through August. The average annual precipitation ranges from 6.5 inches at Wamsutter to 12.75 inches at South Pass City. Elevations range from 7,000 to 7,550 feet above sea level. The most comfortable temperatures occur during the period of May through September. Pinnacles and buttes give some sections of the basin a moonscape appearance and their color is often quite striking. Nearby are features of historic interest such as the Overland Stage Route (1862-66), the emigrant trails and the Semindee Mining District.

North Boundary Medicine Bow National Forest, Wyoming to
Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, New Mexico

This trail segment is predominately through high mountain country with elevations ranging from about 7,500 to over 13,000 feet above sea level. The trail route would be largely above 9,000 feet in the forested Boreal Life Zone but would also traverse considerable mileage above timberline in the Arctic Alpine Life Zone.

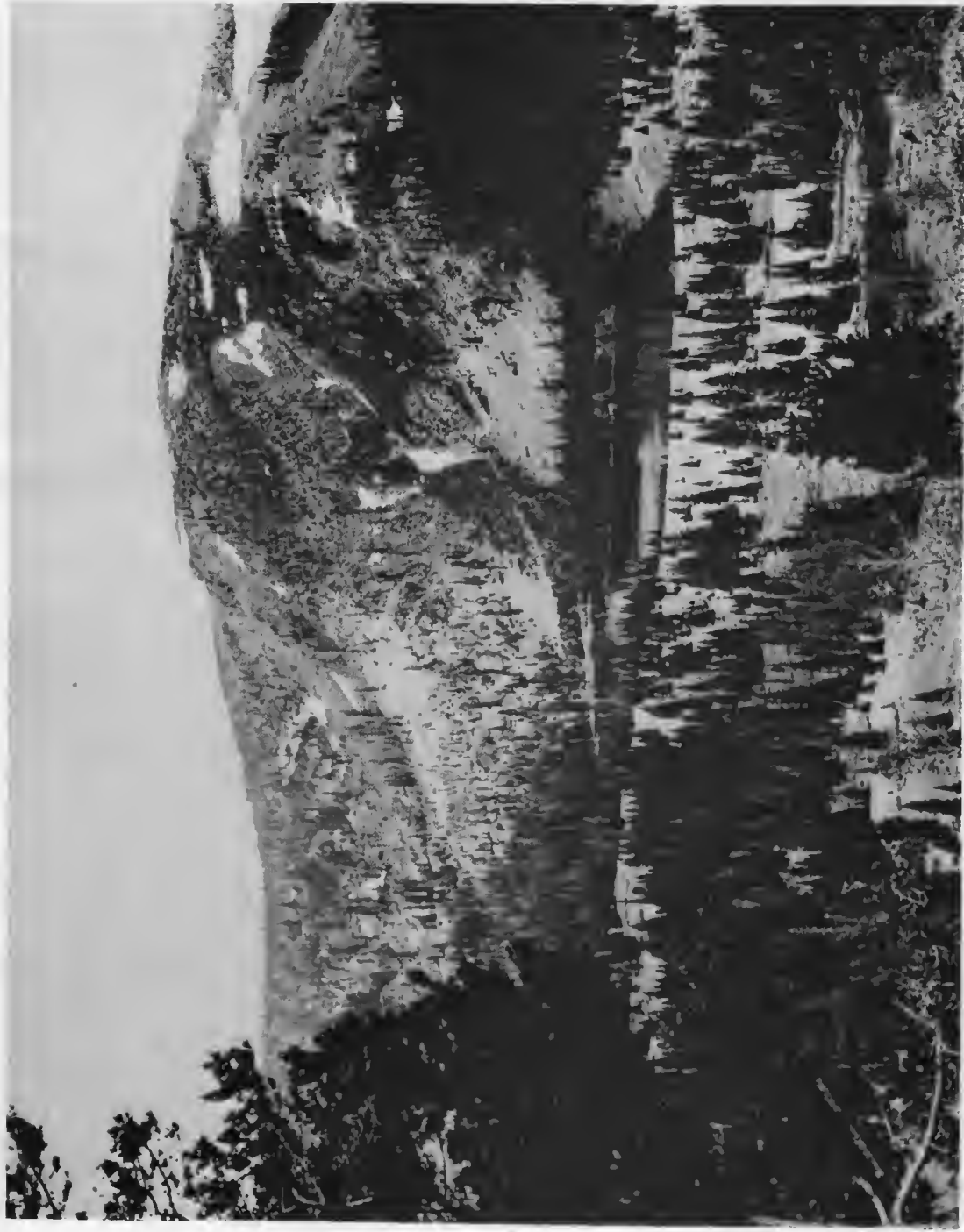
This 860-mile segment of Divide Trail offers outdoor recreation in a variety that should satisfy almost every taste. One could stay an hour or a week or more and enjoy hiking, horseback riding, climbing, hunting, camping, or fishing. He might find a place to swim, boat, pan for gold, watch a timber harvest or hunt for semi-precious stones or gold nuggets. There are unlimited opportunities to photograph wildflowers, wildlife, and mountain scenes. For those who have an interest in the early history of the West there are ghost towns, abandoned railroads, tunnels and mines. In the fall the hunter could find most of the big game animals for which the west is famous and in the winter one could ski, snowshoe and dogsled along the trail route.

Some 52 miles north of the Wyoming-Colorado line the trail route would enter the Medicine Bow National Forest and re-enter the high country where Wyoming's Sierra Madre Mountains form the Continental Divide and the watersheds of Yampa and North Platte Rivers. Known in the past for gold and copper mining, this area is now better known for fishing, elk and deer hunting, and ski touring.

While on a scientific expedition in these mountains in 1879, Thomas Edison conceived the idea of an enduring carbon filament, inspired by his frayed bamboo rod while fishing on the shores of Battle Lake. This idea later resulted in the perfection of his incandescent electric lamp. The U. S. Forest Service has placed a monument at the lake relating this bit of history.

Just south of the Wyoming-Colorado line the trail would follow the Fire Line Trail, a stock driveway that travels along Trail Creek and the North and Middle Forks of Elk River to Gold Creek and up that drainage to Gold Creek Lake - entering the Mt. Zirkel Wilderness Area enroute. South from Gold Creek Lake the trail would again follow near the Divide for 10 miles over existing wilderness trail. Gold Creek Lake and many other alpine lakes in this wilderness offer excellent trout fishing. Near Mount Ethel in the Park Range the trail would leave the wilderness.

The Continental Divide Trail would continue southward along the Park Range of the Divide to 9,426-foot Rabbit Ears Pass. Here the Divide changes to an eastward direction following the Rabbit Ears Range to 9,683-foot Willow Creek Pass. East of Willow Creek Pass the trail would follow the Never Summer Range - descriptively named because the snowfields rarely completely melt in its highest reaches. About seven miles east of the pass the trail would angle northward into the Colorado State Forest.



Battle Lake - Where Edison received his inspiration for a filament later used in his lamp.

U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region Photo



Rabbit Ears - A prominent landmark along the Continental Divide Trail route in northern Colorado.

U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region Photo

The trail would make a half circle for about three miles within the State Forest, passing near Lake Agnes, Michigan Lakes and several other high alpine lakes. Crossing the Divide at 11,400-foot Thunder Pass, the trail would then enter Rocky Mountain National Park where it would follow southward down Lulu Creek to the site of Lulu City. This ghost mining camp was established in 1879 and named for the founder's daughter. The ambitious townsite laid out no less than 100 blocks, 19 streets and 4 avenues. This settlement, which sprang up overnight, melted away almost as fast. Legend has it that it was deserted so fast that the dishes were left standing on the table and clothes left hanging in the closets.

From there the trail would follow the headwaters of the North Fork of the Colorado River south to its confluence with Beaver Creek. Here the trail would cross Trail Ridge Road and pick up the Timber Lake Trail. West of Timber Lake the trail route would cut across to Big Meadows where Tonahuta Creek Trail would be followed to the delightful little resort town of Grand Lake. Here on Colorado's largest natural body of water the Grand Lake Yacht Club boasts it is the highest (8,367 feet) such club in the United States.

South from Grand Lake the trail would skirt the east side of Shadow Mountain Lake and Lake Granby, with Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area. These three bodies of water are part of the Bureau of Reclamation's Colorado Big Thompson Project of the larger Colorado River Storage Project. Water from the Pacific drainage is passed under the Divide through a tunnel to the Atlantic drainage and used for power and irrigation. Recreation is administered by the National Park Service by agreement between these agencies.

Upon leaving the National Recreation Area at Arapaho Bay the trail route would parallel Arapaho Creek past Monarch Lake to rejoin the Continental Divide near 13,606-foot Arapaho Peak, in the Arapaho National Forest.

In the next 45 miles southward the Continental Divide Trail would pass a number of lofty mountains — in fact, some of the highest peaks along the entire 3,000-mile Continental Divide Trail route. In close succession are 13,260-foot James Peak, 12,927-foot Vaszquez Peak, 14,270-foot Grizzly Peak, 14,264-foot Torreys Peak, and 14,274-foot Grays Peak. Interspersed between these peaks are three important passes, Berthoud, Loveland and Rollins passes...all over 11,000 feet elevation.

"On Top of the World" was the description of Corona (Spanish for "Crown") Station at the apex of Rollins Pass. The Moffat Road to the top of the pass was once the highest standard gauge railroad in America. "Hell Hill", as the route was known, was used from 1904 until 1929 when the completion of the Moffat Tunnel under James Peak made the 23 miles of track over the pass obsolete. The Forest Service has a self-guided tour following the path of the old Moffat Road.

Near Silver Mountain, the Continental Divide Trail would enter the Pike National Forest and from there, south along the Front Range, the trail would cross back and forth across the Divide between the Arapaho National Forest and the Pike National Forest.

At 11,541-foot Hoosier Pass, the trail would leave the Blue River drainage and the Arapaho National Forest, pass into the South Platte watershed of the Pike National Forest, and follow the Middle Fork of that drainage to near 14,142-foot Mount Democrat. Here the trail would depart the South Platte drainage and the Pike National Forest and enter the Arkansas River drainage of the San Isabel National Forest.

From there the Continental Divide Trail route would follow the Divide to the vicinity of Climax, Colorado. Here, trail users may want to take a side trip to the other side of the Divide to see the "glory hole" of the world's largest molybdenum mine with its modern treasure of that valuable metal.

Continuing in the Upper Arkansas River watershed, the trail would closely approach the Divide to near 10,424-foot Tennessee Pass, named by homesick prospectors in the 1860's. From here to Halfmoon Campground the trail crosses the ground that contained the gold and silver diggings and treasures that created nearby historic Leadville.

The trail would leave this trailhead campground and travel up Halfmoon Creek. This creek is the drainage between 14,418-foot Mt. Massive and 14,431-foot Mt. Elbert — the highest peak in Colorado and the highest peak along the entire Continental Divide. The trail then would cross the Independence Pass Road and cut across the Upper Lake Creek Drainage, the route of the Ute Indian Trail. Here the trail traverses the Sawatch Range with fifteen 14,000-foot peaks and over fifty 13,000-foot peaks, all within a few miles of the route.

Back on the west slope of the Divide in the Gunnison National Forest, the Continental Divide Trail route would follow the existing "Timberline Trail" for 20 miles across the Upper Taylor River Drainage, climbing to 12,154-foot Tincup Pass – supposedly named from the act of an early prospector who used a tincup to test gravel for gold "color." The trail route would there pass back into the San Isabel National Forest and cross four miles of Upper Chalk Creek drainage to Altman Pass. Here, the Old Alpine Railroad Tunnel is located underneath the Continental Divide. In 1879, Engineer James A. Evans began boring, at an altitude of 11,640 feet, the 1,771-foot long tunnel beneath Altman Pass. Completed in 1880 and abandoned a short 30 years later, the tunnel is still largely intact and of much interest to railroad buffs. Near the west portal of the tunnel, the Forest Service has a self guiding tour marked by 12 signs which explain historical data about the buildings, sites and views along the route.

South along the trail route in the Gunnison National Forest the trail skirts west of 11,306-foot Monarch Pass to the vicinity of Windy Peak. Here the San Isabel National Forest is left behind and the route would follow the Cochetopa Hills, crossing back and forth across the Divide from the Gunnison National Forest to the Rio Grande National Forest.

Farther south along the Divide the trail route would pass east of North Cochetopa and Cochetopa Passes en route to La Garita Wilderness, a 26,300-acre alpine setting dominated by 14,149-foot San Louis Peak. South of the wilderness the Continental Divide makes a unique horseshoe bend. Here in the Creede, Colorado vicinity the Continental Divide Trail route would offer several options for circuitous hiking and horseback experiences where one may start and return to the same trailhead.

Along the south half of the horseshoe, the trail route would cross back and forth between the 240,000-acre San Juan Primitive area and the 56,000-acre Upper Rio Grande Primitive area. This is the San Juan Range which was much loved by the Ute Indians in times gone by. There is great fishing in almost every lake and stream.

Near 13,145-foot South River Pass, the trail route would cross the Divide and leave the San Juan Primitive area progressing southeastward to 10,850-foot Wolf Creek Pass. On the Rio Grande side of the pass, the route flanks the vast San Luis Valley.



The Continental Divide - Northwest from Wolf Creek Pass in the Rio Grande National Forest, Colorado

U.S. Forest Service Oblique Aerial Photograph

Continuing southward, the trail would follow near the crest of the Divide past 13,131-foot Montezuma Peak and 13,272-foot Summit Peak and on past Blue, Green, and Trail Lakes

South of Trail Lake the trail route would depart some distance east of the Divide, past Dipping Lakes on its way to 10,022-foot Cumbres (Spanish for "crests") Pass. On top of the pass there is a large area of grassland that was created by the 26,000-acre Osier Mountain timber fire of 1879. This is a significant ecological study area which demonstrates the slowness of plant succession at high altitudes.

From Cumbres Pass the trail would travel down the west side, following the right-of-way of the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad to Chama, New Mexico, and then west to the Continental Divide. The approximately 16-mile segment of railroad right-of-way extending from Cumbres Pass to Chama, as well as additional trackage from Cumbres Pass east to Antonito, has been acquired by the States of Colorado and New Mexico and is operated under lease as a tourist line by the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad. This narrow-gauge route, formerly part of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad system, dates from 1880 and provides a route of magnificent scenery.

From its point of departure from the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad the trail route would continue along the Continental Divide, cross U. S. Highway 85, and traverse a portion of the Tierra Amarilla Grant to the boundary of the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation.

Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation to Silver City, New Mexico

The key word in this segment is diversity. The biota found along the Continental Divide from the Jicarilla Indian Reservation to Silver City ranges from that of the Transition Life Zone with its ponderosa pine forests to the Upper Sonoran Life Zone with its pinon-juniper covered mesa canyon country and its grass and sage-covered plateaus and mesa tops.



Narrow Gauge Train on the Denver and Rio Grande

Railroad line between Antonito, Colorado and Chama, New Mexico. The Continental Divide Trail would share its right-of-way from the top of Cumbres Pass to the Divide west of Chama, New Mexico.

Terence W. Ross, New Mexico Railroad Auth.



Badlands - Are located west of Regina, New Mexico along the Continental Divide Trail route.

U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management Photo

This, too, is the land of the southwest Indians - both past and present. Here the trail would cross the lands of three Indian Reservations and pass near the ruins of many old Indian cultures. The area is also rich in the history of early Spanish exploration. Coronado crossed the Continental Divide near present State Highway Route 53 searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola. Geologically, too, this is fascinating country with its myriad evidence of past volcanic activity and scenic "badlands."

The trail would enter the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation in the vicinity of the crossing of the old Spanish Trail at Horse Lake Pass. Nearby the Tribe plans a side trail taking in Horse and Stone Lakes, two lakes noted for excellent trout fishing. Additional tourist developments including a guest lodge are planned.

The Upper Sonoran Life Zone dominates the Jicarilla Continental Divide Trail segment. Beginning with five miles of open grasslands and scattered ponderosa pine, the trail route crosses about 17 miles of Transition Life Zone in the more mountainous terrain. In the southern portion of the reservation the grassland gives way to a pinon-juniper woodland with an understory of desert shrub vegetation.

Midway between the north and south boundaries of the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation the trail would leave the reservation and wind through 20 miles of the Santa Fe National Forest. This is largely a pinon-juniper woodland typical of the Upper Sonoran Life Zone. After leaving the Santa Fe National Forest the trail would re-enter the Jicarilla Apache Reservation for a short distance.

South of the reservation the route traverses a mixture of public domain, State, private, and Indian lands. This is largely the home of the "off-reservation" Navajo Indians whose hogans, used for both permanent and seasonal residence, dot the landscape. The Navajo Tribe numbering some 130,000 and covering a total land area of 16,000,000 acres is the nation's largest.

Historically and archeologically the Indian country is of special interest. This remote and semi-arid region was once a principal center of culture in the southwest. About 20 miles west from the Continental Divide Trail route can be found one of the largest assembly of pueblo ruins to be seen anywhere in the country. This ancient Indian civilization developed over a thousand years ago, reached a high level of achievement, and flourished for more than 200 years. These early people excelled in toolmaking, weaving, farming, and masonry.

In 1910, Chaco Canyon National Monument was established to preserve the remains of this agricultural-urban civilization. A museum and the excavated, partially fallen walls tell much of the lives and habits of these ancient people. A connecting trail with the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would provide a very interesting side trip for trail visitors.

Near Thoreau, New Mexico the trail would cross U. S. Highway 66 and travel southward through the Cibola National Forest. Here the trail route would go through ponderosa pine forest along Oso (Bear) Ridge in the Zuni Mountains. This ridge provides outstanding views of nearby volcanic cones and old lava flows.

The trail would leave the Cibola National Forest near Ice Cave, a privately operated tourist attraction. Nearby State Highway 53 could become a connector trail providing access to El Morro National Monument with its historic Inscription Rock, some 15 miles distant. The early popularity of present day Route 53 by the Spanish and later by immigrants, traders, Indian agents, soldiers, surveyors and settlers is well documented in personal inscriptions of many of these people on El Morro's Inscription Rock, a massive point of sandstone rising some 200 feet above the valley floor forming a striking landmark.

The present route of Highway 53 was first used as an Indian trail by Acoma and Zuni Indians as early as the 800's and by the Spanish in the 1500's. The route was also surveyed as a possible transcontinental railroad right-of-way in 1853. It was a military route in the 1860's and was called "Old Fort Wingate Road" or "Zuni Wagon Road."

A bit farther south the trail route would cross the Ramah-Navajo Indian Reservation where, with the exception of the volcanic cones astride the Continental Divide, the topography offers little variety. Here the route is characterized by gently rolling hills covered with stands of ponderosa pine at the higher elevations interspersed with open stands of grass at the lower elevations. Here also occur extensive lava flows which originated from the volcanos situated on the Continental Divide and which the early Spanish named "malpais" or "badland." The route of State Highway 53 overlooks the great Laguna lava flow which covers a vast area. The Continental Divide also contains excellent specimens of extinct volcanos which could be explored by trail visitors.

The next several miles of the Continental Divide Trail route would pass near such colorfully named places as Pie Town, Adams Diggins, and Fence Lake and thereafter enter the Apache National Forest along the Mangas Mountain Range and subsequently enter the Gila National Forest.



Volcanic Cones -

On the skyline mark the Divide across the Ramah-Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico.

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, M-C Region Photo

The route would then proceed around the western and southern sides of the San Augustine Plains before passing into the 170,000-acre Black Range Primitive Area.

Southward along the Black Range of the Gila National Forest, the trail would follow near the spine of the Divide, crossing the Pinos Altos Mountains before reaching Silver City, New Mexico.

Silver City is the southern terminus for this segment. This ripsnorting, wide-open mining town of the late 1800's has much historical interest — for instance it was the hometown of the notorious Billy the Kid. More recently Silver City has become the "Gateway to the Gila Wilderness," which was established in 1924 as the first Federal wilderness area in the United States. The Gila area was also the stronghold of Geronimo and other Apache Indians and the home of ancient cliff-dwelling tribes.

Silver City, New Mexico to the United States-Mexican Border

From Silver City to the United States-Mexico Border, 148 miles, the trail would cross a most interesting stretch of semi-desert country. The route from the vicinity of Silver City would strike generally southward through the southern part of the Big Burro Mountains. In this vicinity the Continental Divide is quite ill-defined and forms a sweeping horseshoe to the east. Rather than follow the Divide the trail would take a shorter route southward to instead follow the Pyramid Mountains which promise more attractive trail opportunities. It would then continue due south and rejoin the Continental Divide in the Animas Mountains.

There are many outdoor recreation opportunities to enjoy along this segment of trail. A uniquely wide variety of plant life offers plant identifiers an opportunity to lengthen their lists. For the history buffs there is a gold rush ghost town named Shakespeare as well as the routes taken by early explorers such as Conquistador Cabeza de Vaca (1535-36) and the Mormon Battalion (1846). During 1849-50 the southern route taken by California-bound gold hunters crossed the Divide at Whitmire Pass. For the amateur archeologist there are many Indian campgrounds and good opportunity to observe surface artifacts. For other interests, the Lower Sonoran Life Zone is habitat for mule and whitetail deer, mountain lion, coyote, bobcat, javalina, coati, fox, as well as numerous rodents. For the rockhound the trail route offers a large variety of agates and other rocks suitable for polishing as well as semi-precious stones.



On the Trail - Black Range Primitive Area - Gila National Forest, New Mexico.

U.S. Forest Service, Southwest Region Photo

This proposed trail would provide almost year-round use due to the generally mild climate. The most pleasing time is during the rainy season from July to September. The average annual rainfall ranges from 18 inches in Cloverdale near the Border to 10 inches at Animas and Lordsburg. Trail elevations range from 4,500 to 8,000 feet above sea level.

Rising to an elevation of 8,500 feet, the Animas Mountains are the most rugged and scenic part along this trail segment. This part of the trail would also afford very scenic vistas of the Peloncillo Mountains lying to the west and the Big Hatchett Mountains, lying to the east. The latter are the home of the desert bighorn sheep. South of the Animas Mountains are the San Luis Mountains where the Continental Divide Trail route would terminate at the United States-Mexico Border. Across the Border the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico continue the Continental Divide in that country.



Broadleafed Yucca - Cholla Cacti and Beargrass make an interesting foreground for this desert vista near the Mexican Border in southwest New Mexico.

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, M-C Region Photo

RELATION TO PEOPLE

The proposed Continental Divide Trail traverses no heavily populated areas. In keeping with the National Trails System Act, the trail would be "within established scenic areas more remotely located." However, many of the large and small communities of the Rocky Mountain States are within one or two hours' drive of the trail. Among these are Helena, Butte, Great Falls and Missoula, Montana; Cheyenne, Laramie, Rock Springs and Rawlins, Wyoming; Denver, Boulder, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Montrose, Alamosa and Durango, Colorado; and Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos, Farmington, Gallup, Silver City, Lordsburg and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

The current population within one hour drive of the trail is about 1,600,000, and within two hours, about 3,700,000. By the year 2000, the time of anticipated completion of the trail, these populations are projected to grow to 2,800,000 and 6,500,000.

In addition to resident populations, the trail would provide potential recreation opportunities to a much larger group -- including the several millions who annually visit the Rocky Mountain States on vacations and for special recreation pursuits. The destination of many of these people are the existing recreation and tourist areas along and near the proposed trail. To the visitor, a Divide trail would be an additional recreation opportunity and tend to enhance the tourist importance of the region.

Access

Good road access to most parts of the Continental Divide is now provided by the existing system of Interstate, United States, State and local highways. From Canada to Mexico there are some 80 major improved roads providing access to the Divide, including six Interstate Highways and 24 primary Federal Aid Highways. Excluding wilderness-type lands, the average interval between these roads is 31 miles. In addition to major roads, the States, counties, and Federal land-managing agencies along the trail maintain an extensive system of lesser access and service roads crossing or closely paralleling the Divide. Together, these road systems, with the exception of wilderness and similar areas, provide frequent and easy access to the trail for the recreationist.

Road access is, of course, prohibited in national forest wilderness and primitive areas and the recognized wilderness candidate areas in national parks. However, the trail user can reach these sections of the Continental Divide route by an existing and extensive system of side trails. Altogether, there are over 250 side trails providing access to the Divide. All are located in national forests and national parks and many are within the wilderness-type lands which are inaccessible by road. There are, for example, over 40 existing side trails leading to the Continental Divide in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and proposed Lincoln-Sagegoat Wilderness. This is the longest -- 145 miles -- continuous span of wilderness-type lands along the proposed Continental Divide Trail.

Visitation

Intensity of visitor use on segments of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would vary according to (1) nearness to population centers, (2) accessibility of the trail, (3) proximity to established recreation areas, (4) attractiveness of the terrain through which the trail would pass and, (5) length of the trail use seasons. Several portions of the trail already are heavily used while other portions would remain relatively lightly visited for years to come.

Present use of existing segments of the proposed Continental Divide Trail is concentrated on existing trail segments in Glacier National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park and the national forest lands in Colorado which are west of Denver. These areas should continue to receive the heaviest visitor use following designation and establishment of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Population growth together with projected concurrent increases in recreation participation rates, attractiveness of the terrain and their challenge to the hiker, horseman and cross-country skier account for this popularity with the recreationist. It is estimated that visitor use of these three sections of the trail would range between 380 and 550--' annual visitor days per mile of the trail. The trail in Rocky Mountain National Park would receive the highest visitor day.^{2/} use of any segment of the Continental Divide Trail

^{1/}All visitor day figures represent the level of use anticipated 5 to 10 years following anticipated completion of the trail. Use figures do not include snowmobiling or other motorized uses specifically prohibited on National Scenic Trails by the National Trails System Act, Public Law 90-543.

^{2/}A visitor day is defined as 12 hours of use by one or more persons. One person using the trail for seven days would be counted as 14 visitor days, while 4 people using the trail for 3 hours apiece would be counted as one visitor day.

Analysis of the more remote and/or less attractive segments of the proposed Continental Divide Trail indicate they would receive limited use. These segments include the relatively flat east rim of the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming, a similar trail segment located roughly between New Mexico Highway 53 to the north boundary of the Apache National Forest, the southernmost trail segment across the semi-arid lands below Silver City, New Mexico, and an additional segment of trail from Lemhi Pass on the Montana-Idaho border to the west boundary of Yellowstone National Park. On these four segments, the projected use is estimated respectively at 35, 50, 50 and 60 visitor days per mile of trail per year.

The remaining segments of the Continental Divide Trail would receive use in the range of 130 to 340 annual visitor days per mile of trail. While these segments would be attractive to the recreationist, the fact that most are located some distance from major population centers tends to place their anticipated use in this intermediate range.

The information presented in Table 1 summarizes projected use for the various Continental Divide Trail segments. Total estimated annual use for the trail is 690,000 visitor days. This would be achieved within 5 to 10 years following completion and compares with an estimated present use on existing segments of trail of about 110,000 visitor days.

Only a very small percentage of the total use of the Continental Divide Trail is expected to come from people attempting to hike or ride it in entirety, and such use should therefore not be considered a principal justification for its designation as a National Scenic Trail. Nevertheless, a continuous travelway from Canada to Mexico would lend an aura to the trail impossible to obtain otherwise, and a small elite group will no doubt strive to make this a lifetime goal. Several individuals and parties are known to have hiked or ridden horseback long distances along the Continental Divide - efforts to travel the entire distance within the various States being the most common. The lack of continuous, developed trails have made some of these extremely hazardous undertakings, and in some instances they necessarily have involved trespassing on non-public lands. Available records show that a few persons have accomplished - or very nearly accomplished - the entire trip from Canada to Mexico.

TABLE 1 - PROJECTED TRAIL VISITATION AND MAJOR USE SEASONS
FOR THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

SEGMENT	MILES	AVERAGE VISITOR DAYS/MILE OF TRAIL/YEAR	PROJECTED VISITOR DAYS PER YEAR	MAJOR USE SEASON
Rocky Mountain National Park and Shadow Mountain NRA in Colorado.	34	590	20,000	Jun-Sep
Glacier National Park in Montana-	95	400	38,000	Jun-Sep
South boundary Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado to New Mexico- Colorado line.	628	380	239,000	Jun-Sep
New Mexico-Colorado line to south boundary Jicarilla Indian Reservation in New Mexico.	109	340	37,000	Jun-Oct
Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana.	79	330	26,000	Jun-Sep
South boundary Yellowstone National Park to south boundary Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming.	225	290	65,000	Jun-Sep
North boundary Apache National Forest to Silver City in New	242	250	60,000	Apr-Oct
South boundary Glacier National Park to State Highway 200 in Montana.	197	250	49,000	Jun-Sep
State Highway 200 to U.S.Highway 91 in Montana.	171	240	41,000	Jun-Sep
U.S.Highway 91 in Montana to Lemhi Pass on Idaho-Montana Border.	221	150	33,000	Jun-Sep
South boundary Jicarilla Indian Reservation to State Highway 53 in New Mexico.	154	150	23,000	Apr-Oct
North boundary Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming to Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado.	162	130	21,000	Jun-Oct
Lemhi Pass on Idaho-Montana Border to west boundary Yellow- stone National Park.	245	60	15,000	Jun-Sep
Silver City, New Mexico to U.S.- Mexico Border.	148	50	7,000	All Year
State Highway 53 to North boundary Apache National Forest in New Mexico.	139	50	7,000	Apr-Oct
South boundary Shoshone National Forest to North boundary Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming (Great Divide Basin)	253			
TOTALS	3,102	35	9,000	May-Oct
		226	690,000	

I/Projections represent the level of use 5 to 10 years
following anticipated completion of the trail.

Table 1 also indicates the length of the major use season for the various trail segments. For the most part, use will be concentrated in the summer months of June, July, August and September. However, in central and southern New Mexico the major use season can be extended to include the spring and fall months, while conditions along the southernmost segment of the Continental Divide Trail are actually conducive to year-round use.

Winter use along the Continental Divide Trail would tend to be localized, although where favorable conditions exist, it would constitute a significant proportion of overall use. Contrary to popular belief the snow conditions at higher elevations are not always the best as far as cross-country skiing is concerned. This fact coupled with adverse elements and the danger of avalanches conspire to generally limit the value of high mountain areas for this particular use. Crosscountry skiing and other winter uses would be most prevalent in timbered areas at lower elevations and adjacent to developed ski areas - especially those areas situated along the trail in the Colorado Rockies.

A particular 25-mile segment of the proposed Continental Divide Trail in Colorado between Berthoud Pass and Loveland Pass has been pointed out as having an excellent potential for a cross-country ski trail. It could be tied in with the Berthoud Pass, Loveland and Winter Park Ski centers and several departure points could be developed where skiers who couldn't make the entire trip could get off the Continental Divide Trail and ski down to waiting cars.

Based upon present indications, winter use would probably account for no more than five percent of the total use estimated for the trail. =/ In established ski touring areas winter use could amount to as much as ten percent. Adjacent to developed ski areas, it could rise to as much as twenty percent if the trail was laid out and managed with winter use in mind.

1/ One of the reasons for this small percentage is the fact that comparatively few winter users would spend their nights on the trail. This tends to depress visitor day estimates for the winter use season.

Land Ownership and Land Use

Land Ownership

The 3,102-mile Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would cross 25 national forests, 4 national parks and recreation areas, various tracts of public domain land, and a small but important mileage of State, Indian Trust, and private land. The public lands, Federal and State, are distributed broadly along the trail; only in New Mexico does the percentage of these lands fall below 85 percent (refer to Table 2).

Along the northern portion of the proposed trail in Montana and where it follows the Idaho-Montana border, the trail route crosses about 95 percent Federally owned lands, most of which are national forest. Only four miles of the trail alignment are State-owned, consisting of small scattered parcels. Most of the 46 miles of privately owned proposed trail route in Montana and Idaho is found southwest of Butte, Montana, between units of the Deerlodge and Beaverhead National Forests.

A similar land ownership pattern exists in Wyoming where 85 percent of the proposed trail route is Federally owned. Again, over half of this is contained in national forests and in Yellowstone National Park, although a significant mileage of the trail in the Great Divide Basin is public domain land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. There are also 23 miles of State land and 70 miles of privately owned land found interspersed along the trail with the public domain lands.

In Colorado the amount of Federal land along the trail is 95 percent. These 735 Federally owned miles are all on national forest lands with the exception of the 33 miles within Rocky Mountain National Park and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area and a very small mileage of public domain land located between the Routt and Arapaho National Forests in northern Colorado. The nine miles of State-owned lands include the Colorado State Forest, northwest of Rocky Mountain National Park, and the right-of-way of the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad.

The land ownership pattern along the 792 miles of proposed trail alignment in New Mexico differs from other sections of the trail route in that the percentage of Federal land is considerably less, slightly more than 50 percent. This Federal mileage is within four national forests and on public domain land, located mostly in the central and southern portion of the State.

TABLE 2 - LAND OWNERSHIP IN MILES - CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

STATE	FEDERAL ^{1/}	STATE AND LOCAL	PRIVATE	INDIAN	TOTAL
Montana	FS 606 NPS 96 BLM <u>7</u> 709	2	38	--	749
Idaho	FS 158 NPS 1 BLM <u>13</u> 172	2	8	--	182
Wyoming	FS 277 NPS 77 BLM <u>160</u> 514	23	70	--	607
Colorado	FS 697 NPS 33 BLM <u>5</u> 735	9	28	--	772
New Mexico	FS 278 BLM <u>124</u> 402	66	204	120	792
TOTALS	FS 2,016 NPS 207 BLM <u>309</u> 2,532 (82%)	102 (3%)	348 (11%)	120 (4%)	3,102 (100%)

^{1/} FS - Forest Service
NPS - National Park Service
BLM - Bureau of Land Management

Indian lands are encountered along 120 miles of the Divide in New Mexico. These are the lands of the Jicarilla Apache, Off Reservation Navajo, and Ramah-Navajo in northern and central New Mexico. The 66 miles of State and 204 miles of private land is scattered throughout the State.

Land Use

Land Uses along the proposed Continental Divide Trail route reflect to a great degree its relative distance from population centers, its land ownership pattern and the management policies of various public and private interests. The climate, vegetation, topography and geology of the trail corridor also strongly determine land use. Together, these factors have acted to restrict intensive development of the Continental Divide and to produce for the most part, a stable land use pattern. Thus, principal uses are (1) general recreation, (2) wilderness preservation, (3) watershed management and, (4) seasonal grazing and logging under strictly private auspices or under the multiple use management systems of the U-' S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. In addition, mining has had an influence on some of the lands adjacent to the Continental Divide. Table 3 shows the principal land uses according to miles of trail.

The wilderness and primitive lands, 13.2 percent of the total, are those within the National Wilderness Preservation System or being reviewed for inclusion in that system by the Forest Service. All are protected according to the principles of the Wilderness Act of 1964 which provides that such areas should be managed to protect their natural condition, retain their primeval character and influence, without commercial activities and roads. Recreation, however, is a major use of wilderness lands, and, although intensively developed recreational facilities are not permitted, there are numerous trails existing through wilderness areas along and near the Continental Divide.

The three National Parks - Glacier, Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain - are classified as natural areas. These areas are generally available to recreationists. Much of the trail route through these parks is considered of wilderness character some of which will be reviewed by the National Park Service for possible future inclusion in the Wilderness Preservation System.

Exclusive of national forest wilderness and primitive areas and national park lands, there are over 400 miles of trail route above timberline. The alpine tundra, characteristic of this area, supports vegetation which is grazed by both livestock and wildlife. In national forests such use is permitted where suitable under the multiple use management policy.

TABLE 3: PRINCIPAL LAND USE BY MILES ALONG THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

STATE	FOREST SERVICE WILDERNESS AND PRIMITIVE AREAS	NATIONAL PARK AND RECREATION AREAS	BELOW TIMBERLINE <u>1/</u>	SEASONS GRAZING LANDS		BUILT-UP AREAS	TOTALS
				ABOVE TIMBERLINE <u>2/</u>	TIMBERED LANDS <u>3/</u>		
Montana	151	96	98	157	247	-	749
Idaho	-	1	35	57	89	-	182
Wyoming	148	77	211	2	166	<u>34/</u>	607
Colorado	84	33	8	220	426	<u>15/</u>	772
New Mexico	27	-	285	-	480	-	792
TOTALS	410	207	637	436	1,408	4	3,102

1/ Includes some Pinon-Juniper woodland used primarily for grazing.

2/ Also used for watershed and recreation; much of the wilderness-type lands are also above timberline.

3/ Includes commercial and non-commercial types as well as logged-over areas. Also used for watershed management, recreation and grazing.

4/ South Pass City, Lamont, Bairoil.

5/ Town of Grand Lake.

The lands below timberline, again exclusive of national forest wilderness and primitive areas or national park lands, are mostly forested and include about 1,400 miles of trail route. Approximately 1,100 miles of this forested trail route is within national forests and managed under the multiple-use sustained yield concept. However, because of the generally high elevation and relatively rugged topography of these forested lands, much of the timber is not commercially valuable and logging operations, with certain exceptions, are and will continue to be limited.

The remaining nearly 300 miles of forested trail route are not in Federal ownership and are found almost exclusively in New Mexico. Much of this is in the northern part of the State located on private and Indian lands. These non-Federal lands are being actively logged and have considerable commercial importance.

In addition to the above land uses, there are almost 650 miles of trail which would cross grasslands where grazing is the principal land use. Almost half of this is found in New Mexico at lower elevations along the proposed trail route. Much of this semi-arid grazing area in New Mexico is covered by grasses and shrubs and consists of private, Indian, or unappropriated public domain land. Considerable grazing land is also found along the Idaho-Montana portion of the trail and in the Great Divide Basin of Wyoming. Again, most grazing activity here is on private or unappropriated public domain lands.

The Continental Divide Trail route passes close to five major areas of mineral activity. These are the Butte-Anaconda and Marysville districts in Montana, sections of the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming, the Climax area of Colorado and Tyrone area in New Mexico. The trail would bypass the actual mining locations, and for this reason this activity has not been listed among the principal land uses on the preceding table. There is, however, a potential for increased mining activity along or near the Continental Divide Trail which could have significant impact on the trail and its use in future years. The major identified mining areas are apt to spring up as discoveries are made. Natural gas and petroleum exploration and coal mining have probably the most rapid growth rate, with increased activity especially evident in the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming and in scattered locations in New Mexico.

Several other land uses, occupying an insignificant amount of actual trail mileage, are found along the Continental Divide Trail route. These include highway crossings, transmission lines and similar man-made structures on the landscape. They do not materially detract from the trail experience.

Fortunately, most of the land uses occurring along the Continental Divide Trail are entirely compatible with recreational trail use. In many instances, incompatible activities can and have been avoided by sensible route selection in order to avoid conflicts in use. Therefore, with few exceptions, the trail provides and will continue to provide the hiker and rider with an attractive forest or pastoral setting.

TRAIL PLAN

The trail plan for the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail considers several interrelated factors affecting the timing, location, development and management. Among these are the very length of the trail, the diverse ecosystems and topography through which the trail passes, differing management objectives of the agencies administering lands along the trail, costs, varying levels of recreational use and matters of public safety. Another special consideration is the relationship of the trail to national recreation priorities. Together, these factors indicate that establishment of the proposed national scenic trail should be a long-range recreation development program and one which allows for flexible standards relative to trail location, development, operation and maintenance.

The basic goal of the trail is to provide the hiker and rider an entree to the diverse country along the Continental Divide in a manner which will assure a high quality recreation experience while maintaining a constant respect for the natural environment. The latter is axiomatic, and has been one of the overriding considerations in the determination of alignment, development standards and long-range management for the trail.

Trail Alignment (Refer to map on page 7)

The alignment of the Continental Divide Trail coincides with the actual spine of the Continental Divide in relatively few locations. A literal Divide trail is considered totally undesirable due to reasons of hazardous topography, exorbitant costs, a restricted clientele, and because of the

severe environmental impact such location would entail. The selection of suitable alignments therefore employed the principle that the trail should be as close to the Continental Divide as possible but as far away as necessary to provide for safe travel and general recreation appeal, to be economically feasible and to keep its environmental impacts to a minimum.

This planning principle favors the incorporation of already developed rights-of-way into the alignment of the trail. This has the effect of further reducing costs and environmental impacts, and with potentially little sacrifice in the quality of the trail experience. Existing rights-of-way are of several kinds. They consist of (1) trails located in National Forests, National Parks, and on Public Domain, (2) primitive roads located on and off Federal management areas, and (3) in one location, the right-of-way of a narrow gauge railroad.

A total 1,484 miles of existing trails have been included. Of these, 1,310 miles require at least some upgrading to bring them up to national scenic trail standards. The degree of upgrading varies widely, some calling for comparatively little effort and expense, but with a significant number requiring major refurbishing. (See Table 4.)

Roads have been included in the alignment of the proposed Continental Divide Trail. Most are of a primitive nature and would offer recreation experiences not materially different in quality than that extended by bona fide hiking and riding trails. This similarity in character is the principal reason for the use of a considerable mileage of roadways occurring in national forest areas. Elsewhere the use of roads is felt justified on more practical grounds, such as illustrated in the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming.

In the 253-mile stretch of desert-like terrain lying between the Shoshone and Medicine Bow National Forests, a total 218 miles would be crossed on primitive roads. This is considered the most feasible and economic means to effect a continuous travelway in an area which promises to be a very lightly used segment of the overall trail. It is recommended, therefore, that vehicular use now existing on the selected trail route be continued. This vehicular use, however, should be evaluated from time to time to assure that conflicts in trail use are not developing. Should conflicts develop, vehicular use would be curtailed or limited, or the trail would be relocated.

TABLE 4: MILEAGE OF EXISTING TRAILS AND ROADWAYS INCLUDED
IN ALIGNMENT OF THE PROPOSED CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

	EXISTING TRAILS (MILES)	EXISTING ROADWAYS (MILES)	TOTAL (MILES)	PERCENTAGE OF TRAIL IN EXISTENCE
Montana	540	118	658	88 %
Idaho	96	59	155	85 %
Wyoming	301	218	519	86 %
Colorado	492	5	497	64 %
New Mexico	55	24	79	10 %
TOTALS	1,484	424	1,908	62 %

The following will characterize the location of the Continental Divide Trail based on the foregoing considerations. The trail would coincide with or closely follow the Continental Divide for about 600 miles or one-fifth of its total length (three hundred of those miles would be over the relatively gentle terrain within the State of New Mexico.) Beyond this the trail would cross the Continental Divide some 475 times to link up and follow suitable trails on opposite sides. Lastly, the trail route would depart from the Continental Divide by as much as 30 miles (at a point south of Silver City, New Mexico) and over its entire length would be located an average 1.6 miles from the Divide.

Right-of-Way Acquisition

Since this report recommends that the designated trail be limited initially to those segments of trail already in existence on Federal lands and no new major trail developments be undertaken along the route until higher priority needs in the vicinity are met, the following discussion relates only to actions in a future time frame when the above conditions no longer apply.

Across non-Federal lands, the acquisition of public rights-of-way would be necessary in order to provide a continuous long distance trail. On the Continental Divide Trail this amounts to 570 miles of right-of-way. Table 5 gives a state-by-state breakdown of non-Federally owned trail mileage.

Federal agencies, particularly the Forest Service and National Park Service, have the authority to acquire lands or rights-of-way within the exterior boundaries of national forests and national parks. About one-fifth of the total non-Federal ownership occurs as inholdings and could be acquired in this manner.

Although Section 7(e) of the National Trails System Act provides for Federal acquisition of the remaining segments in the event that State and local governments fail to act within two years, final decisions on how best to acquire the necessary trail right-of-way should be deferred until a future time as indicated above.

On non-Federal lands, a maximum corridor width of 200 feet is considered sufficient to develop, mark, and protect the immediate vicinity of the trails. It should be emphasized that this would be a maximum and that in the majority of cases a lesser right-of-way would need to be acquired. The amount to be acquired should be the minimum necessary to permit adequate public access and to preserve the integrity of the trail and the quality of the trail experience. However, for the purposes of estimating area and acquisition costs, a standard 200-foot corridor is used in this report. On this basis the total area involved along the Continental Divide Trail is about 14,244 acres.

The following table gives a state-by-state breakdown of the non-Federal lands over which public rights-of-way would have to be provided along the trail if it is to be a continuous route.

TABLE 5: RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS - CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

STATE		MILES	ACRES
Montana	40	1,000	
Idaho	10	240	
Wyoming	93	2,324	
Colorado	37	920	
New Mexico	390	9,760	
TOTALS		570	14,244

Public access across private lands might be achieved in several ways including cooperative agreements, the exchange of public and private lands, donation, or purchase of the necessary rights-of-way in either fee or less than fee title. It has not been possible to ascribe specific means of acquisition to any given parcels of private land. However, as a general observation, the less restrictive means would be entirely adequate for purposes of the Continental Divide Trail and should be encouraged. In keeping with Section 7(e) of Public Law 90-543, private lands should be acquired in fee only if lesser methods are not sufficient to expedite establishment of the trail and to assure public access.

With respect to State, locally-owned and Indian tribal lands, it is probable that rights-of-way could be secured by means of cooperative agreements with the respective Federal agencies responsible for trail administration, or through direct participation in trail establishment by these non-Federal entities (see section on Trail Administration).

Recommended Trail Development Standards

The Continental Divide Trail would cross lands of widely varying character. In addition, different trail segments would receive varying degrees of use depending upon location and relative attractiveness. This diversity in topography, soil type, and expected use will necessarily require a variety of trail standards to accommodate the trail user while attempting to minimize both environmental impacts and trail maintenance needs.

Although specific standards may vary for various segments, the Continental Divide Trail would be a simple facility for foot and horseback use in keeping with the national scenic trail concept as seen in the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails. Typically, this will mean a tread width varying between 18-24 inches and a pathway cleared of major obstructions to a maximum 7 feet wide and 10 feet high. To keep from unduly scarring the landscape, the trails would avoid unnecessary switchbacks by using the steepest practical grade considering such factors as susceptibility to erosion and the trail user. As a practical matter, sustained grades of up to 10 percent would be used. In all cases, disturbed areas would be revegetated or stabilized by other means.

In wilderness areas the trail standards are intended to create trails that emulate game trails to the greatest possible extent. They are intended to be as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from a distance and designed to promote solitude. They are not designed, constructed, or maintained for speed and no tread work is done on side slopes of less than 30 percent unless specific soil types make this necessary to prevent soil loss. Clearing is held to a minimum necessary to permit the intended use (i.e., less clearing for foot travel than for horse travel) and at the same time protect wilderness values. In no event are wilderness trails cleared to the extent that they leave the visitor with a straight line effect. Wilderness trails generally wind through trees rather than follow a straight line and may have logs or obstructions to step over. Clearing on foot trails, where necessary, is done only to the extent necessary to allow the hiker sufficient room to walk between trees. The traveler may brush against protruding branches as he winds along the way.

Grade is not an influencing factor when designing wilderness trails. Sustained grades may detract from the objectives of wilderness management. Trails are designed to have grades that conform as much as possible with the "lay of the land" and promote natural drainage, cause the least disturbance to the wilderness resource, promote the feeling of solitude by reducing to a minimum the sight distance between travelers, and will not cause soil erosion.

Wilderness trail reconstruction would be limited to that which is necessary to correct serious soil erosion problems and/or restore the trail to the wilderness standards described above.

In some areas where conditions permit, it would be possible to use even lesser standards. The Great Divide Basin in Wyoming and the semi-desert trail segment below Silver City in New Mexico are two particular areas where the most minimal of standards for trail development would be possible and are advocated both for economic reasons as well as to lessen the impact on the environment. In such areas the extent of development might be the placement of trail markers and with little or no actual tread development. At least 350 miles of the Continental Divide Trail could be established in this manner.

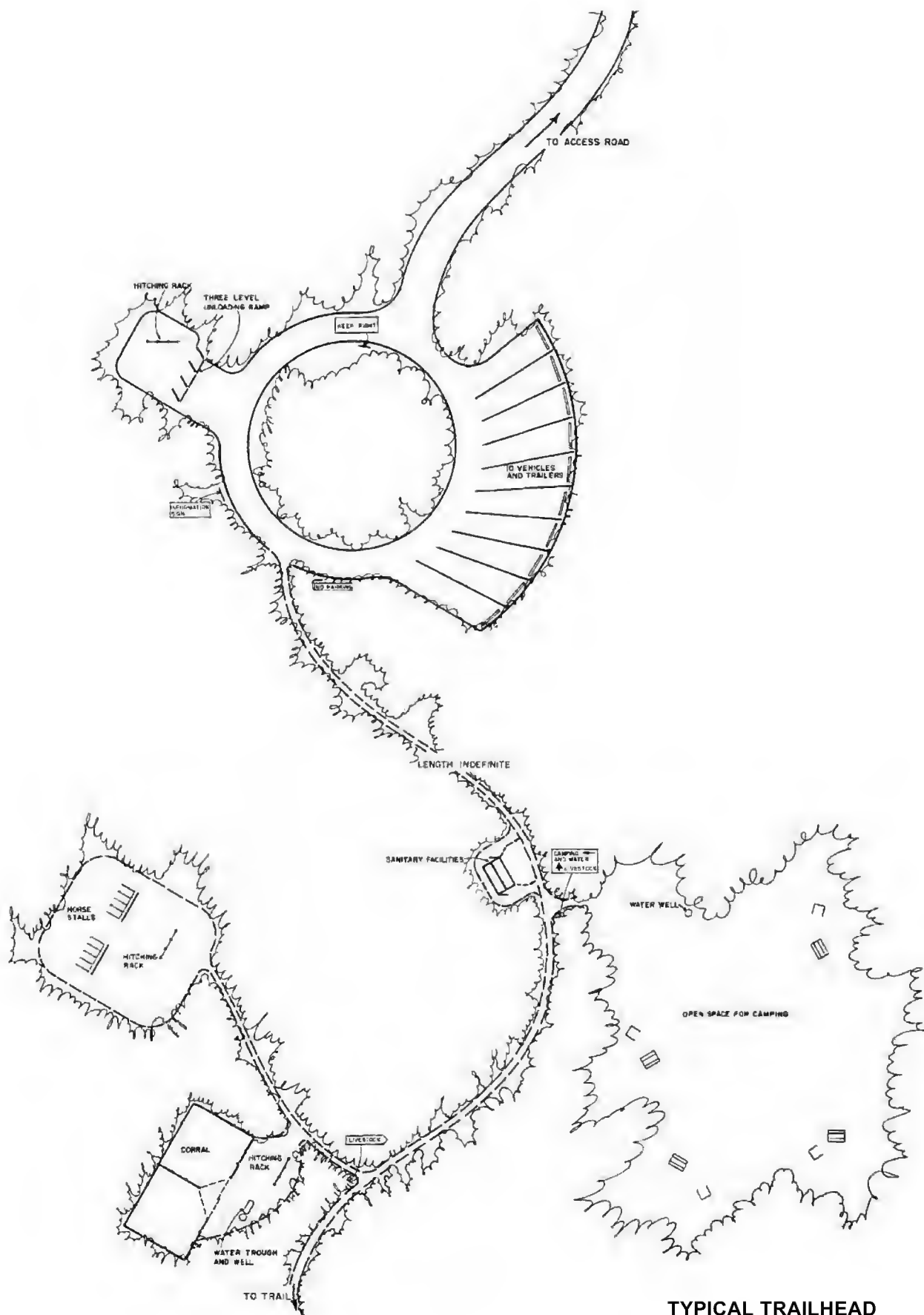
Trail Facilities

Accommodations in the form of trailheads and intermediate resting areas would be required. Trailheads are points where the hiker and rider may gain initial access to or exit from the trail. They would provide space for parking vehicles, stock loading ramps, corrals and hitchracks, water and sanitary facilities and camping accommodations.

Trailheads would, of course, vary in size and makeup according to location, type and extent of use and the like. The sketch on the following page illustrates a trailhead of the type commonly provided by the Forest Service adjacent to major access roads. It has been determined that 142 trailheads would be required along the Continental Divide Trail.

Intermediate resting areas would be designated sites accommodating those traveling enroute along the trails. They would be relatively primitive in nature and provide little more than camping space, fire circles, water, sanitary facilities, hitchracks and other basics. Owing to the number and rather even distribution of trailheads which can also accommodate those en route, far fewer intermediate resting areas would actually be required. They would number about 69 for the Continental Divide Trail.

Trailheads and intermediate resting areas as a rule would not be located directly on the trails. Instead, they would be set back at least several hundred yards in order to protect the integrity of the immediate trail environment. In some cases they would be located several miles away. The latter would be especially true in wilderness or primitive areas where no facilities would be



TYPICAL TRAILHEAD

provided and where the hiker and rider would gain access and egress by means of existing side trails. Concern for the safety and comfort of the trail user also dictates that overnight accommodations for those traveling above timberline be located in timbered locations at lower elevations. It should also be emphasized that the numbers of trail facilities listed previously include many instances in which existing recreation sites in national forests and national parks would be enlarged and improved to accommodate users of the respective National Scenic Trails.

Generally, shelters would not be required on either trail. Modern backpacking equipment makes shelters much less necessary than was the case at one time. Shelters also tend to concentrate use to the detriment of the environment. In addition, they can be difficult to maintain and scheduling occupancy can present a dilemma. For purposes of this report, therefore, shelters have not been included among the facilities for the trail and do not figure in the cost analysis. However, it should be recognized that future conditions might make shelters desirable in special instances. Some examples would include national parks (chalets are already a reality within Glacier National Park) and on portions of the trails established and operated by non-Federal interests whose management objectives include more sophisticated facilities.

Trail Route Marking

The route of the Continental Divide Trail should be marked with a standard National Scenic Trail emblem. Following is a suggested emblem for the proposed Continental Divide Trail.



Management Considerations

Designation of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail is not expected to materially affect present land management policies or practices. The design, operation and maintenance of the trail would be done in a manner consistent with and requiring little or no alteration of the management objectives on either public or private lands.

No alteration in multiple-use plans for Federal lands along the trail routes is recommended. This is in accordance with Section 7(a) of the National Trails Act which states:

"Development and maintenance of each segment of the National Trails System shall be designed to harmonize with and complement any established multiple-use plans for that specific area in order to assure continued maximum benefits from the land."

To further this principle as it applies to non-Federal lands, the trail corridor need not be fenced except where presented as an expressed condition in the acquisition of rights-of-way. Existing land uses should not be subject to alteration except for reasons of public safety or as a convenience to the adjacent landowner.

When the trail crosses fragile lands or lands being protected within units of the national park system or wilderness preservation system, the land administering agencies should retain full authority to curtail any trail use which might impair or damage natural values, or the values for which those lands were being protected. The lands involved would continue to be subjected to the provisions of the legislation under which national parks or wilderness areas were established. In the event of conflicting policy, should such occur, that with the most restrictive provisions should apply.

The already designated Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail crosses 17 wilderness and primitive areas for approximately 400 miles. To date, there has been no administrative or management conflict between wilderness or primitive area designation and national scenic trail status. Congress, when it designated the Pacific Crest Trail as an initial unit of the National Trails System, clearly indicated that there is not necessarily any inconsistency between the management objectives of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the National Trails System Act. In fact, the opposite may be true; national scenic trail status may lead to increased public and agency awareness of the values of our wilderness lands and of the need to properly manage those lands in order to preserve their wilderness character.

These facts notwithstanding, it has been determined that a bare minimum of new trail would need to be developed in the nine national forest wilderness and primitive areas and the roadless areas within the three national parks located along the Continental Divide Trail. Table 6 provides details relative to the trail in these areas.

TABLE 6: EXISTING AND NON-EXISTING TRAILS IN NATIONAL FOREST
WILDERNESS AND PRIMITIVE AREAS AND NATIONAL PARKS

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

AREA	TOTAL MILES	MILES EXISTING TRAIL	MILES NON-EXISTING TRAIL
Glacier National Park	95	78	1
Yellowstone National Park	79	55	2
Rocky Mountain National Park	21	21	
Bob Marshall Wilderness	100	100	
Anaconda-Pintlar Wilderness	51	51	
Teton Wilderness Bridger	73	73	
Wilderness Mt. Zirkel	75	75	
Wilderness La Garita	16	16	
Wilderness Weminuche	17	17	
Wilderness Black Range	56	46	1
Primitive Area	27	27	
TOTALS	610	559	51

Road Crossings

The proposed national scenic trail would involve numerous highway and road crossings. Under present circumstances, except for Colorado, no special separation structures would be required. Appropriate signing and care in selecting crossings would be sufficient in most cases, and with respect to interstate highways, it is possible to utilize already existing tunnels, overpasses, and the like.

The separation structures (overpasses or underpasses) would be required in Colorado. According to the Colorado Division of Highways these would be located at Berthoud Pass on U.S. Highway 40, Monarch Pass on U.S. Highway 50, and Wolf Creek Pass on U.S. Highway 160. The cost of these structures has been included among the costs appearing later in this report.

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Future highway improvements and increases in traffic volumes may eventually require separation structures in other areas. Costs for additional structures have not been included in this report. However, details regarding the financing of separate structures would be determined by the administering agency.

Trail Establishment

Establishment of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail would constitute a worthy addition to the national trails system.

The magnitude of this proposal, and its relationship to other national recreation commitments, dictates that the trail be completed over an extended period of time. Accordingly, the trail has been programmed for establishment in phases over 30 years. Priority for the development and activation of the trail has been assigned to those segments with the highest anticipated use. These are generally nearest population centers, in noted tourist destination areas or segments which otherwise promise the most attractive and challenging recreation opportunity. Conversely, more remote or less attractive portions should be developed later and as recreation pressures and needs arise. In this manner, the establishment of the trail would be a long-range recreation program in which the expenditure of public recreation monies is allocated in accordance with increasing recreation needs at regional and national levels.

The schedule of priorities contains three categories, each with three or more segments of trail assigned to them according to anticipated use (refer to Table 7 and the map of trail priorities). Priority I includes two segments with a projected annual use greater than 350 visitor days per mile of trail. Priority II includes those segments with projected annual use between 125 and 350 visitor days per mile. Priority III segments are those in which the anticipated annual use is less than 125 visitor days per mile.

The Priority II category includes several trail segments which utilize existing trail for almost their entire length. In these cases, the priority system covering overall trail establishment should not prevent the various land managing agencies from completing soon after Congressional authorization the short connections of new trail needed to provide basic trail continuity. In many cases these connections are already included in normal trail development programs. Neither is the priority system intended to run counter to any non-Federal initiatives to participate in implementation of the trail plans. Should the various States, Indian tribal councils and local governments find it desirable to develop trail segments and put them in operation, they should be encouraged to do so.

TABLE 7: RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES FOR TRAIL ESTABLISHMENT

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

PRIORITY I - 753 miles

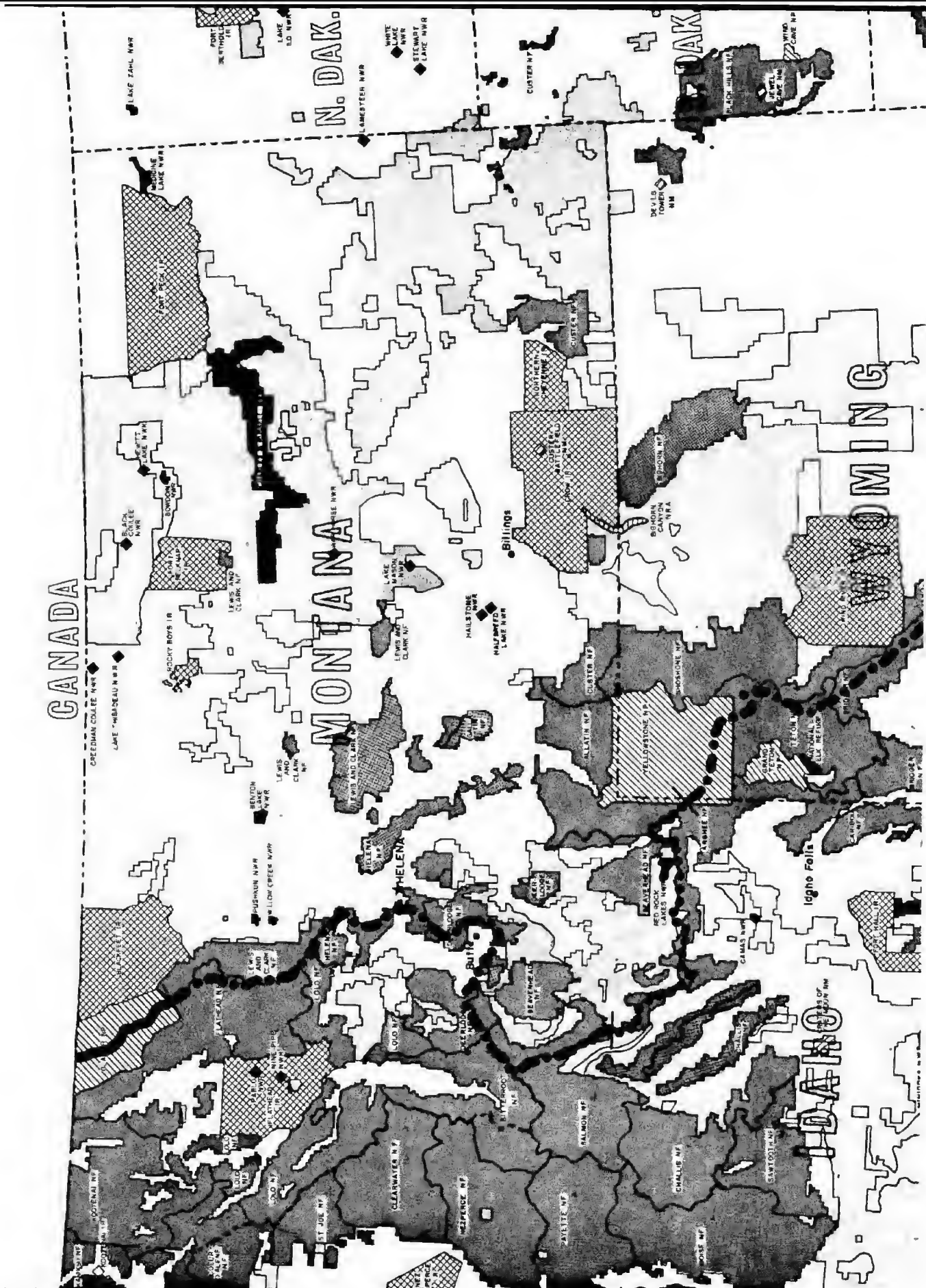
1. Glacier National Park, Montana
 2. North boundary Rocky Mountain National Park to Cumbres Pass, Colorado.
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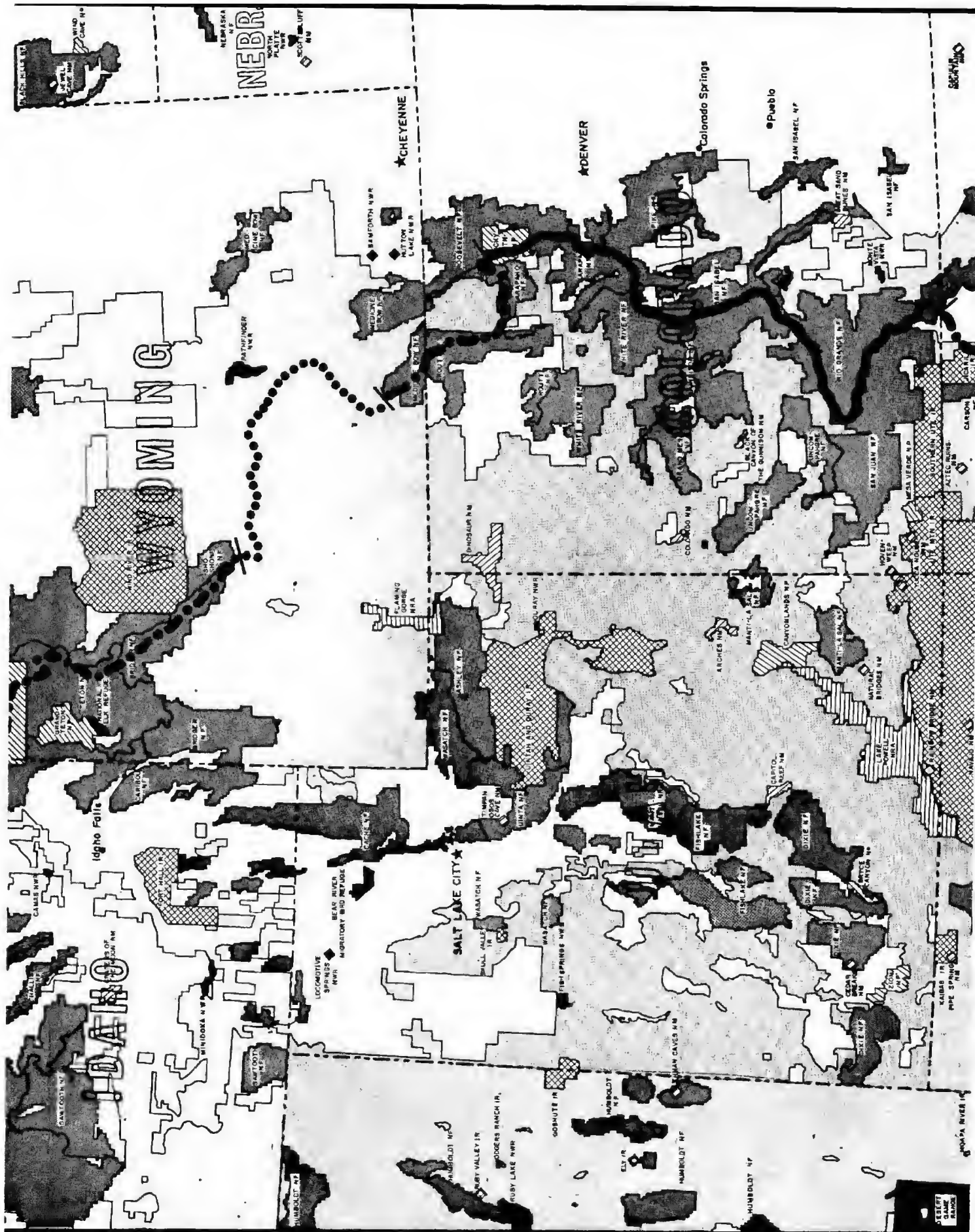
PRIORITY II - 1,564 miles

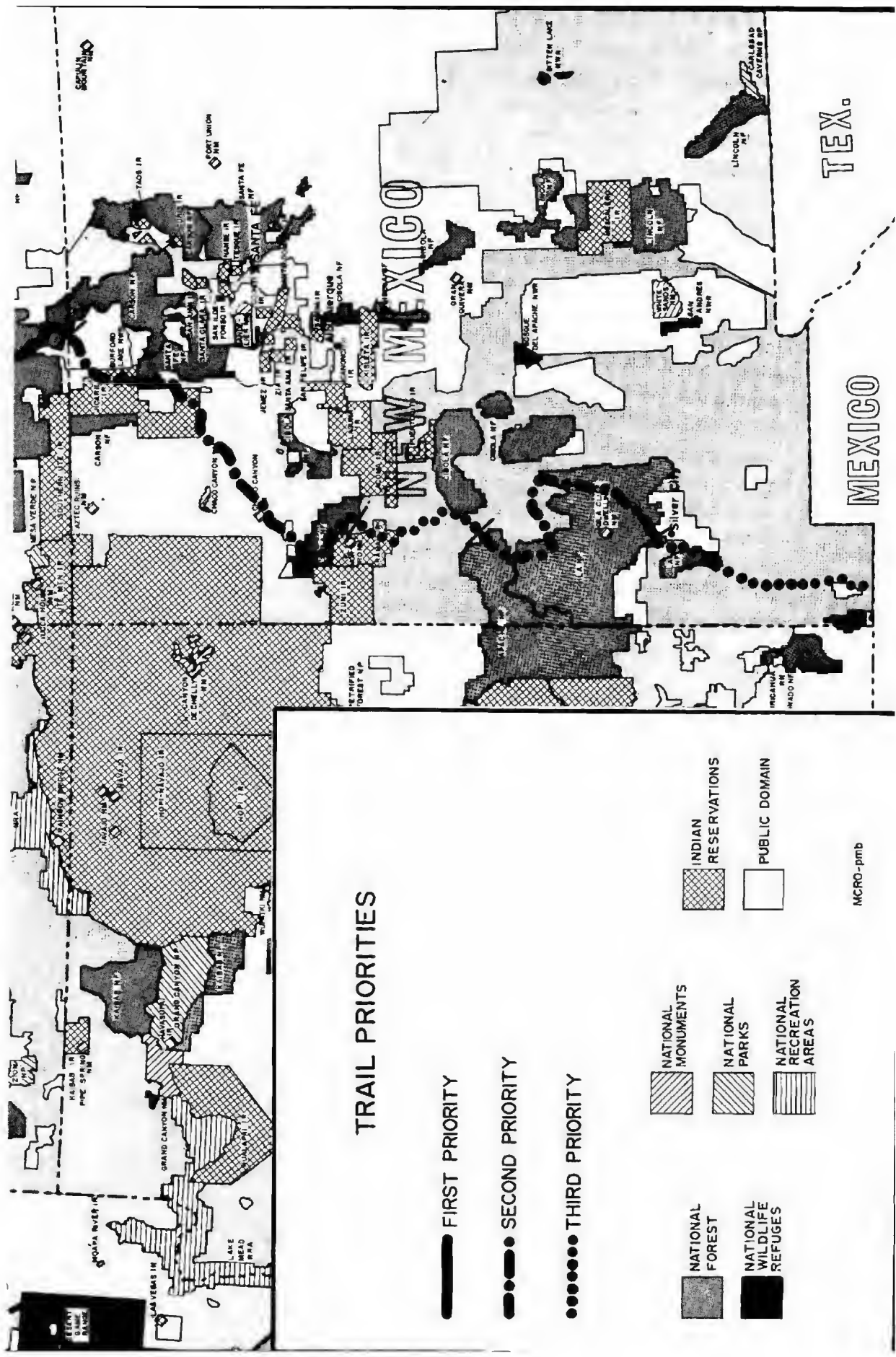
1. South boundary Glacier National Park to Lemhi Pass on the Montana-Idaho line.
 2. West boundary Yellowstone National Park to south boundary Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming.
 3. North boundary Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming to north boundary Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado.
 4. Cumbres Pass, Colorado to State Highway 53 in New Mexico.
 5. North boundary Apache National Forest through Gila National Forest in New Mexico.
-

PRIORITY III - 785 miles

1. Lemhi Pass on Montana-Idaho line to Yellowstone National Park.
2. South boundary Shoshone National Forest to north boundary Medicine Bow National Forest (Great Divide Basin in Wyoming).
3. State Highway 53 to north boundary Apache National Forest in New Mexico.
4. South boundary Gila National Forest to United States-Mexico border.







An International Trail

Canada presently is studying the possibility of a national Great Divide Trail generally following the Continental Divide in that country. This Canadian Trail could easily be tied to the American Trail by a short, 10-mile connector trail already existing along Boundary Creek in Glacier National Park. Such a connection would give the trail a truly international flavor and should receive serious consideration in the future. Mexico, on the other hand, has no similar studies underway.

COST

Establishment of the Continental Divide Trail would require capital expenditures over the thirty-year schedule covered by the trail plan as well as continuing expenditures for long-term operation and maintenance of the trails. The trail plan emphasizes a priority schedule for the establishment of trail segments so as to meet projected recreation needs as they arise and trail costs would be allocated accordingly. Capital costs for the acquisition and development of Priority I trail segments are estimated at \$6,513,000. Capital costs for the Priority II and Priority III segments are estimated at \$14,087,000 and \$5,370,000, respectively. Refer to Tables 8 and 9 for cost breakdowns according to priority and State. All dollar figures included in this report are based on current values and costs (1976).

Right-of-Way Acquisition

The acquisition monies, estimated at \$2,101,000, represent the expected maximum cost of 200-foot trail right-of-way across 468 miles of the trail route (included are privately owned lands and Indian trust lands). For the purposes of this study, acquisition cost has been calculated on the basis of purchase in fee. It is anticipated, however, that this cost could be substantially reduced by acquiring public access across private lands through cooperative agreements with landowners, by purchase in less than fee title, or by land donations or exchanges.

Trail and Facility Development Costs

Unit costs for new trail development and for the upgrading of existing trails vary widely based on the terrain being crossed and the particular standards being used. Where the topography is gentle and the ground not heavily vegetated, as in some of the non-mountainous areas of New Mexico and Wyoming, costs will be in the neighborhood of a few hundred dollars per mile. In more rugged country, however, where the safety of the trail user and the need to protect the natural environment also become very important concerns, development costs for certain segments reach as high as \$29,000 per mile of trail. Overall the average cost per mile of new- trail is about \$6,600. Because the trails requiring upgrading are almost all located in rugged and ecologically sensitive areas, this cost averages \$8,900 per mile.

The unit costs of facility development would vary from as low as \$3,500 for some of the smaller and more primitive intermediate rest areas, to as high as \$150,000 for the larger and higher quality trailheads. The total cost of facility development is estimated at \$4,236,000.

TABLE 8: TRAIL COSTS ACCORDING TO PRIORITY

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

PRIORITY & LENGTH	RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	NEW TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	UPGRADE EXISTING TRAIL	SUITABLE EXISTING TRAIL ^{1/}	FACILITY COSTS	TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE COST
I 753 miles	22 miles \$128,000	229 miles \$2,310,000	340 miles \$2,713,000	184 miles \$ 28,000	\$1,334,000	\$ 6,513,000	\$ 216,000
II 1,564 miles	201 miles \$768,000	593 miles \$3,735,000	801 miles \$7,168,000	170 miles \$ 26,000	\$2,390,000	\$14,087,000	\$ 431,000
III 785 miles	245 miles \$1,205,000	372 miles \$1,830,000	169 miles \$1,786,000	244 miles \$ 37,000	\$ 512,000	\$ 5,370,000	\$ 183,000
TOTALS 3102 miles	468 miles \$2,101,000	1194 miles \$7,875,000	1310 miles \$11,667,000	598 miles \$ 91,000	\$4,236,000	\$25,970,000	\$ 830,000

^{1/} Costs listed include chiefly trail marking costs.

TABLE 9: TRAIL COSTS ACCORDING TO STATE

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

STATE & LENGTH	RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	NEW TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	UPGRADE EXISTING TRAIL	SUITABLE EXISTING TRAIL ^{1/}	FACILITY COSTS	TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE COST
Montana 749 miles	38 miles \$ 241,000	90 miles \$1,218,000	558 miles \$5,433,000	101 miles \$ 15,000	\$ 918,000	\$ 7,825,000	\$ 196,000
Idaho 182 miles	8 miles \$ 46,000	28 miles \$ 280,000	138 miles \$1,409,000	16 miles \$ 3,000	\$ 238,000	\$ 1,976,000	\$ 49,000
Wyoming 607 miles	70 miles \$ 411,000	88 miles \$ 779,000	225 miles \$2,085,000	294 miles \$ 45,000	\$ 608,000	\$ 3,928,000	\$ 152,000
Colorado 772 miles	28 miles \$ 166,000	275 miles \$2,369,000	365 miles \$2,653,000	132 miles \$ 19,000	\$1,447,000	\$ 6,654,000	\$ 224,000
New Mexico 792 miles	324 miles \$1,237,000	713 miles \$3,229,000	24 miles \$ 87,000	55 miles \$ 9,000	\$1,025,000	\$ 5,587,000	\$ 209,000
TOTALS 3102 miles	468 miles \$2,101,000	1194 miles \$7,875,000	1310 miles \$11,667,000	598 miles \$ 91,000	\$4,236,000	\$25,970,000	\$ 830,000

^{1/} Costs listed include chiefly trail marking costs.

Annual Operation and Maintenance Costs

Average annual operation and maintenance costs for the trail and facilities would approximate \$200 per mile for the trail itself and five percent of initial construction costs for the facilities. Included are the monies required for materials and manpower for regular repair and maintenance of the trail as well as the regulation, enforcement, and supervision of their use. Employment requirements, included in the above costs, are estimated to average one man year per 100 miles of trail.

Annual costs would, of course, increase incrementally throughout the thirty-year schedule for the establishment of the trail to achieve an estimated \$830,000 per annum upon completion.

GENERAL

The costs associated with acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of the proposed trail are considered to far exceed the monies available in regular Federal agency trail programs. In the case of the Forest Service and National Park Service, which have the largest on-going programs, allocations for trail work already tend to be strained. This fact is reflected in delayed development schedules as well as in growing maintenance and operation problems on existing trail networks established by these agencies.

Because their commitments to on-going trails programs are already great, the Federal agencies are not in a position to absorb the costs associated with the proposed Continental Divide Trail. Acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way, the development, operation and maintenance will require funding above and beyond the amounts now available to the respective agencies for these purposes.

There is a distinct possibility that the various States and Indian tribes would be willing to assume complete or partial responsibility for segments of the trail in areas of particular interest to them. These entities are eligible to receive 50 percent matching assistance for acquisition and development projects from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Additionally, Indian reservations are classified as Economic Redevelopment Areas and as such are covered by financial assistance programs under the Economic Development and Public Works Act of 1965. Development projects sponsored by Indian Tribal Councils can, under present circumstances, be assisted up to 80 percent with Federal funds. Economic Development funds have frequently gone to support Indian recreation programs and conceivably would be available for trails purposes.

TRAIL ADMINISTRATION

The complex land ownership pattern along the proposed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail makes single-agency development, operation and maintenance both impractical and unnecessary. Instead, these should be the responsibility of the various Federal agencies and other public entities now having principal jurisdiction over respective trail segments. In this manner, trail development, operation and maintenance would be shared by three Federal agencies - the Forest Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management - the States of New Mexico and Colorado, and three Indian tribes - Jicarilla Apache, Off-Reservation Navajo and Ramah Navajo, all located in New Mexico. The map and Tables 10 through 13 on the following pages contain the breakdown of recommended trail responsibilities.

Only in New Mexico and Colorado is State participation in trail implementation recommended. The State-owned portions of the Continental Divide Trail route in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming consist of small scattered parcels of land and, in these cases, it is felt more appropriate for the States to enter into cooperative agreement with the Federal agency having overall responsibility in those areas. In Colorado, the extent of State ownership is equally small but the parcels involved are located in designated recreation areas in which trail development, operation and maintenance would be in keeping with established management objectives.

The States of New Mexico and Colorado and the three involved Indian Tribal Councils should be encouraged to assume full responsibility for trail implementation and bear the costs associated with the respective trail segments, including right-of-way acquisition where required, trail and facility development, and operation and maintenance. Tables 11, 12 and 13 also indicate these associated costs, which are a portion of the total trail costs presented in the previous section.

Relative to the recommended participation in trail implementation by non-Federal entities, it should be noted that during the course of the study no attempt was made to obtain official views from either the States of New Mexico or Colorado or from the various Indian Tribal Councils. The recommendation is instead based on informal expressions of interest by those entities and is in keeping with the purposes of Section 7(h) of Public Law 90-543 which encourages non-Federal participation in National Scenic Trail programs.

TABLE 10: RECOMMENDED FEDERAL AGENCY TRAIL RESPONSIBILITIES

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

<u>Federal Agency</u>	<u>Segment</u>	<u>Miles</u>
National Park Service	1. Glacier National Park.	95
	2. Yellowstone National Park.	79
	3. Rocky Mountain National Park through Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area.	<u>34</u>
	SUBTOTAL	208
Forest Service	1. All trail mileage in Montana and Idaho except National Park lands.	834
	From south boundary Yellowstone National Park to trail exit from south portion of Shoshone National Forest, Wyoming.	225
	From trail entrance to Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming to Cumbres Pass in Colorado, except National Park Service and state segments.	783
	From entrance into Santa Fe National Forest to entrance, Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation.	28
	From U.S. Highway 66 through Cibola National Forest to New Mexico Highway 53.	38
	Apache and Gila National Forests.	<u>227</u>
	SUBTOTAL	2,135
Bureau of Land Management	Great Divide Basin between Shoshone and Medicine Bow National Forests.	253
	From Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation to Section 36, Township 20N, Range 6W.	26
	From south boundary of the Apache National Forest to north boundary of Gila National Forest.	43
	From exit of south unit of Gila National Forest to State Road at Section 36, Township 31S, Range 18W.	<u>63</u>
	SUBTOTAL	385
	TOTAL	2,728

TABLE 11: RECOMMENDED PARTICIPATION AND TRAIL COST SHARING BY INDIANS

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

SEGMENT	LENGTH	RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	FACILITY DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE
Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation	49 miles	- miles N/A	\$213,000	\$77,000	\$290,000	\$ 14,000
Off-Reservation Navajo (segment between Section 36, Township 20 N, Range 6W to U.S. Highway 66)	90 miles	21 miles \$95,000	\$130,000	\$87,000	\$312,000	\$23,000
Ramah-Navajo (from State Highway 53 to south boundary Ramah-Navajo Indian Reservation)	36 miles	3 miles \$18,000	\$ 52,000	\$44,000	\$114,000	\$10,000
TOTALS	175 miles	24 miles \$113,000	\$395,000	\$208,000	\$716,000	\$47,000

TABLE 12: RECOMMENDED PARTICIPATION AND TRAIL COST SHARING BY STATE OF NEW MEXICO

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

SEGMENT	LENGTH	RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	FACILITY DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE
From Colorado-New Mexico boundary to Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation	32 miles	20 miles \$ 89,000	\$122,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 247,000	\$ 8,000
From south boundary Ramah-Navajo Indian Reservation to Apache National Forest	103 miles	86 miles \$385,000	\$448,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 888,000	\$ 23,000
Section near Silver City between the two units of the Gila National Forest	13 miles	10 miles \$ 47,000	\$ 38,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 121,000	\$ 4,000
From State Road at Section 36, Township 31S, Range 18W to U.S.-Mexico border	44 miles	39 miles \$178,000	\$319,000	\$ 44,000	\$ 541,000	\$ 11,000
TOTALS	192 miles	155 miles \$699,000	\$927,000	\$171,000	\$1,797,000	\$ 46,000

TABLE 13: RECOMMENDED PARTICIPATION AND TRAIL COST SHARING BY STATE OF COLORADO

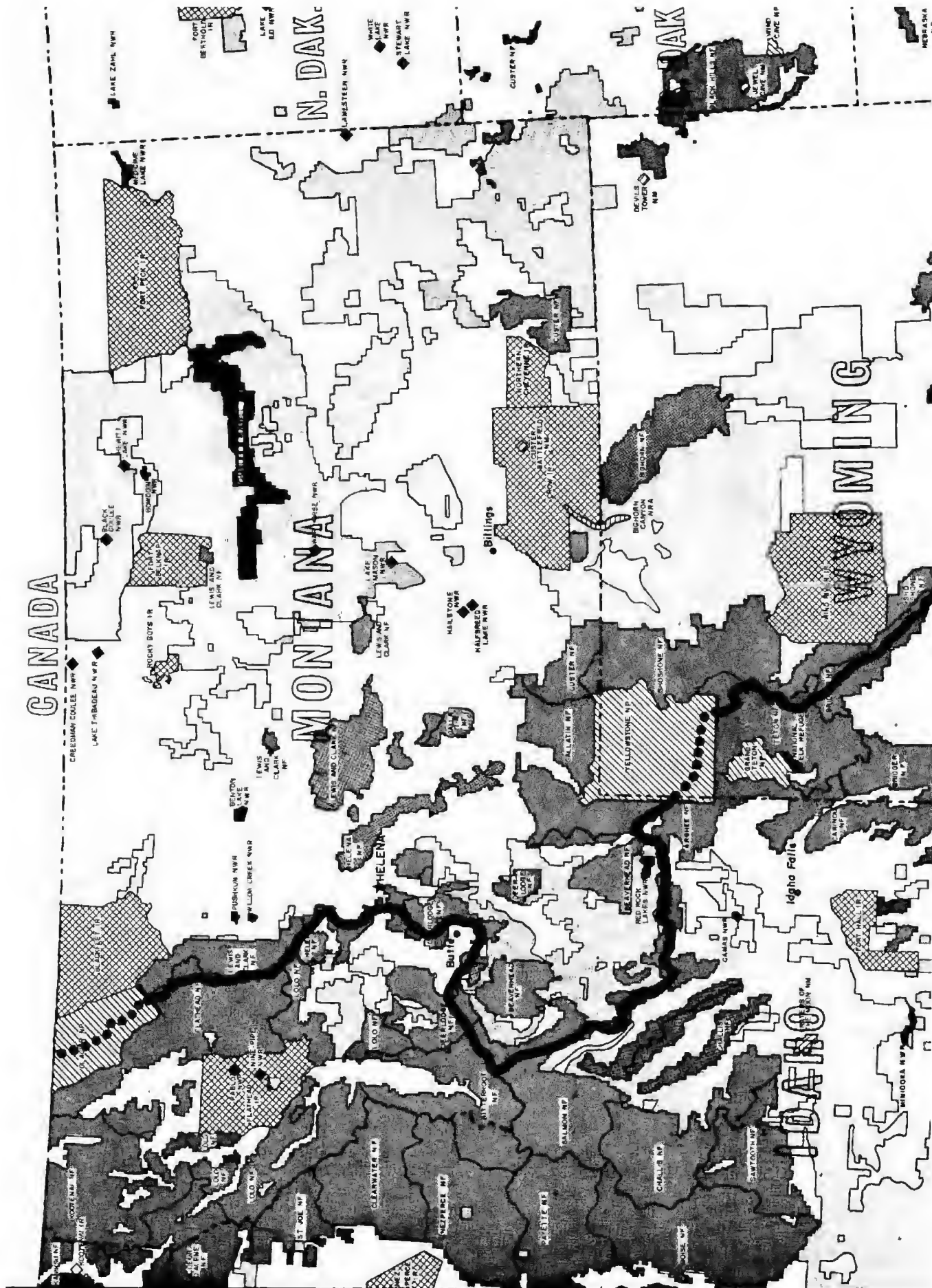
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

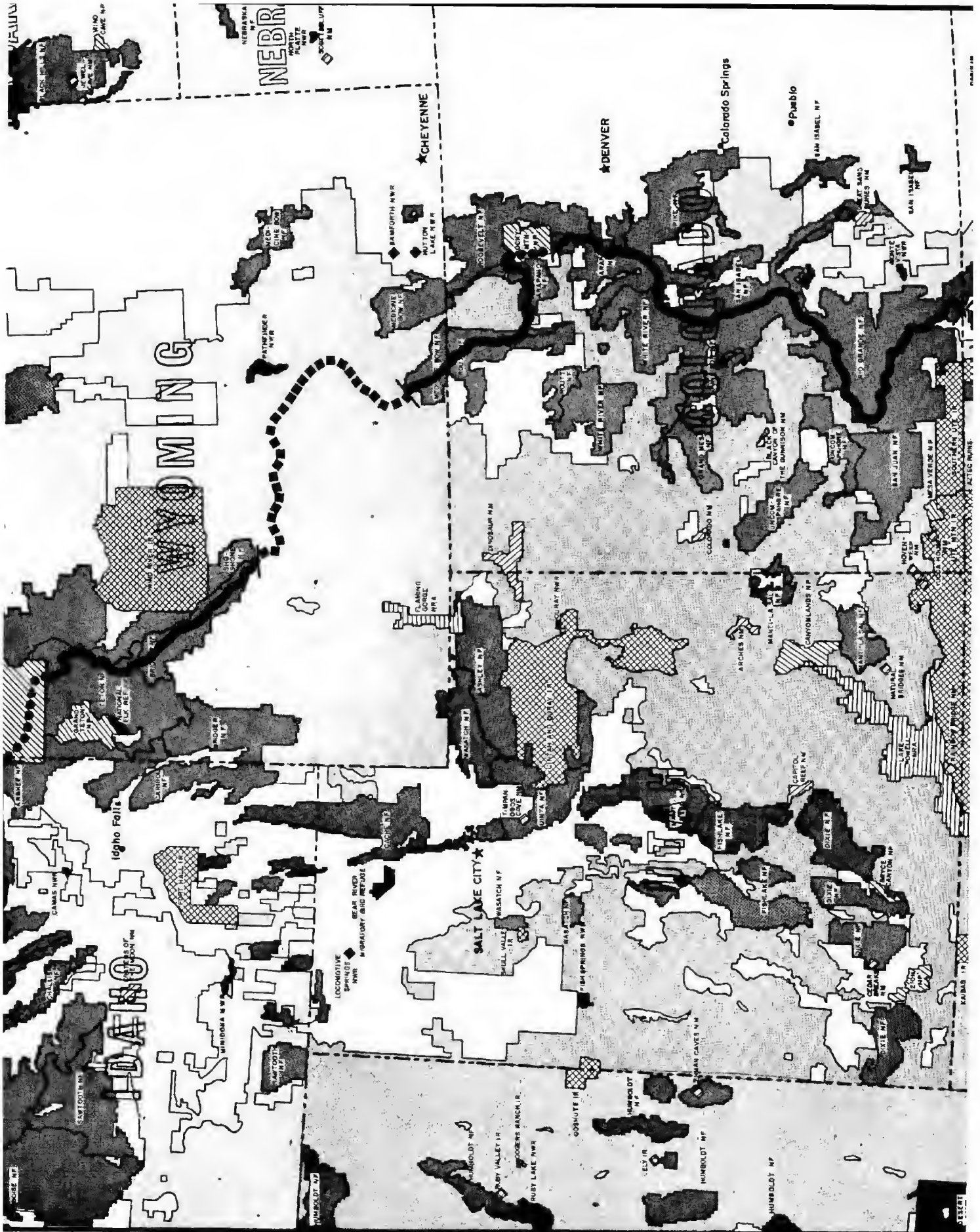
SEGMENT	LENGTH	RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	FACILITY DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATION & MAINTENANCE
Colorado State Forest	4 miles	-	\$ 26,000	-	\$ 26,000	\$1,000
Cumbres Pass to Colorado- New Mexico line (following State-owned railroad right-of-way)	5 miles	-	\$ 15,000	-	\$ 15,000	\$1,000
TOTALS	9 miles		\$ 41,000	-	\$ 41,000	\$2,000

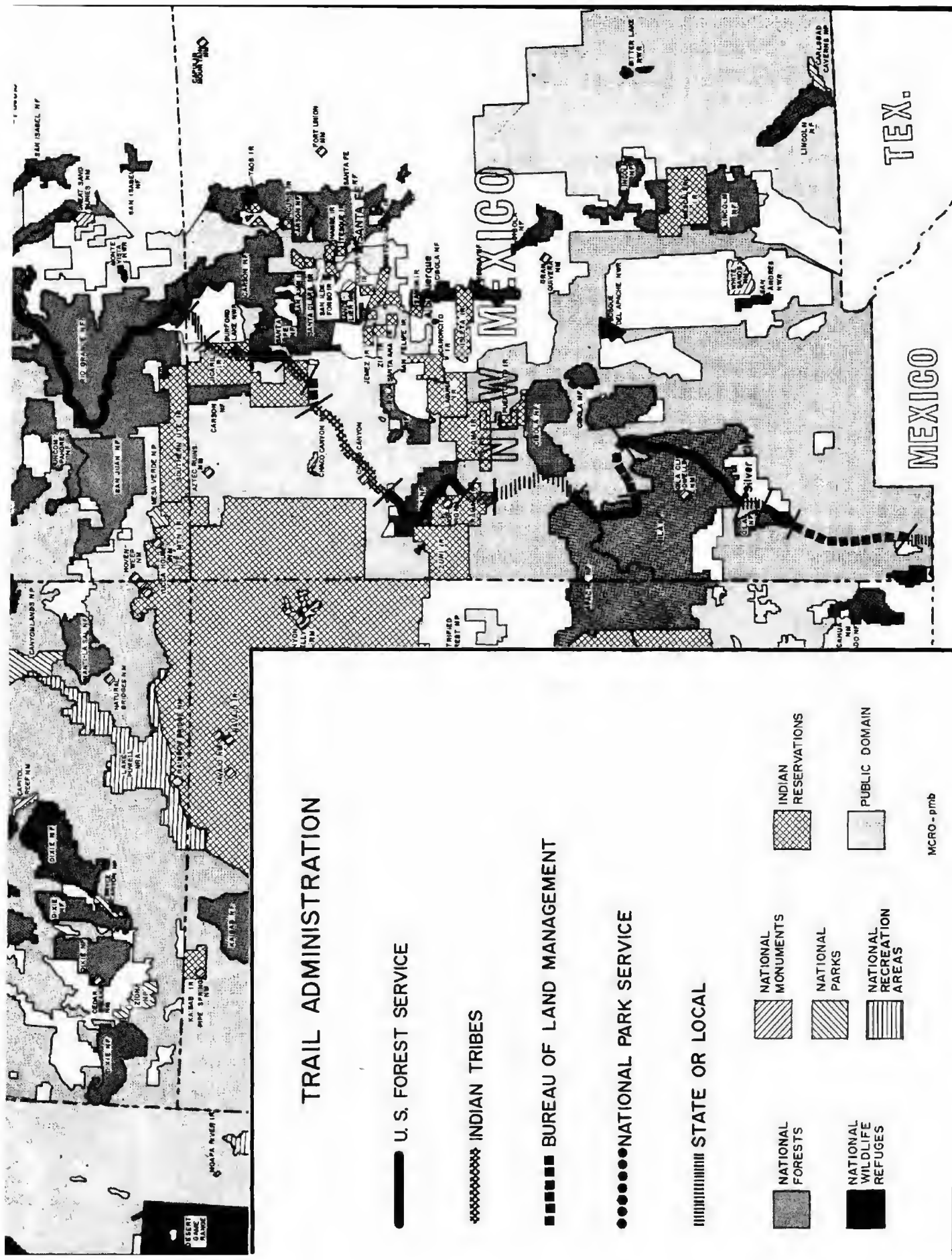
Should the States and Indian tribes decline full responsibility for acquiring, developing, operating, and maintaining the segments of the trail herein recommended for subsequent development, it is proposed that these responsibilities then be assumed by the adjacent Federal land managing agencies. The Federal agencies in question would have to be provided with the necessary authority to acquire rights-of-way in these areas. Section 7(e) of the National Trails System Act (Public Law 90-543) contains this conditional authority and adequately serves this purpose.

Responsibility for overall administration and coordination of Continental Divide National Scenic Trail matters should rest with the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the heads of other Federal and State agencies where lands administered by them are involved. Such responsibilities should include:

- a) selection of the specific trail route, as provided for in Section 7(a) of the National Trails System Act within three years of the date of enactment of this Act.
- b) signing of the route in cooperation with other land managers, and
- c) at the appropriate time, making a recommendation to the Congress for establishment of the balance of the trail not currently in existence.







TRAIL ADMINISTRATION

U. S. FOREST SERVICE

INDIAN TRIBES

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE OR LOCAL

- NATIONAL FORESTS
- NATIONAL MONUMENTS
- NATIONAL PARKS
- NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES
- INDIAN RESERVATIONS
- NATIONAL RECREATION AREAS
- PUBLIC DOMAIN

MCRO - pmb

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

Monetary Benefits

Establishment and recreational use of the proposed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail could result in significant economic benefits to the communities and regions along the trail. The benefits would evolve from direct expenditures for goods and services by the recreationists using the trail, particularly by the overnight user, and indirectly by expenditures resulting from the expansion of services and facilities which would be enhanced by the establishment of the trail. The latter services and facilities include packers and guides, "dude ranchers," outlets selling hiking, backpacking and trail rider equipment, sporting goods stores in general, and to a lesser degree, motels, gas stations, and restaurants. The growth of these activities would expand local and State tax bases, which it is believed would be far in excess of any losses in revenue from any lands which might be taken off tax rolls in establishing the trails.

Economic activity would also be created or expanded through expenditures for land acquisition and development of the trail. Although these would be one-time expenditures, a capital investment of over \$25 million is substantial. In addition, the operating costs for the trail of approximately \$800,000 per year would have some effect on the economy of the region.

Impact on Other Economic Activity

Through trail designation no economic activity, present or foreseeable, would be appreciably curtailed along the trail route. Because of the nature of the present land ownership and management patterns along the route and the distance from population centers, it is also unlikely that National Scenic Trail designation would restrict opportunities for alternate land uses.

About 2,500 miles of the Continental Divide Trail would be on Federal lands which are classified for a variety of purposes. In Glacier, Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain National Parks and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area (combined length 207 miles) no non-recreational economic activities take place and there could be no adverse economic impact through trail designation.

The remaining nearly 2,300 miles involve national forests and public domain lands which are managed according to the multiple-use concept and support a broad spectrum of economic activity. Here, the basic planning of the trail and the development of policies relating to its management, have been guided by Section 7(c) of the National Trails System Act which provides that National Scenic Trails should harmonize with and complement any multiple-use plans. The alignment of the trail avoids as much as possible those commercial operations, active mining areas and the like, which have fixed locations. Also inasmuch as no changes in overall management policies are advocated for purposes of trail designation, extensive use such as grazing and timber harvesting could continue essentially uncurtailed.

The State, Indian and privately owned lands along the proposed National Scenic Trail are used for the most part for similar extensive land uses, particularly in New Mexico where most of these lands are found.

Here again, the necessary rights-of-way would be acquired by the most non-restrictive means possible, the trail corridor need not be fenced, and the traditional economic uses of the land would be able to continue essentially unabated.

LIABILITY

Liability is related to the susceptibility of the trail managers and adjacent private interests to possible legal claim from injury suffered by the trail user along the proposed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. As a general rule, liability follows responsibility. Thus, if a trail user is injured because of negligence on the part of the trail manager, then the manager may be liable for damages suffered as the result of that negligence.

The trail manager would not be considered insurer of the safety of the trail user, as the user, in most cases, would be considered an invitee. Under these circumstances, the trail manager would have the duty to exercise ordinary care to keep the trail in reasonably safe condition and may be liable to the user who at no fault of his own is injured by the manager's failure to do so. In the case of possible dangers which are beyond the reasonable ability of the manager to control - wild animals with vicious propensities for example - the manager would not usually be liable for injuries to the trail user but might have the duty of informing users of their presence.

The liability of private landowners adjacent to the trail would be principally related to the fencing laws of the western States. The laws of all five States through which the Continental Divide Trail would pass - Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico - do not require a rancher to fence in livestock but rather require that a landowner erect a fence if he wishes to keep livestock from trespassing on his property. Thus, in those instances where the unfenced national scenic trails are adjacent to private grazing land, the private landowner generally would not be liable for injuries to the trail user caused by his normal grazing animals legally found in the trail corridor. The situation might be different, however, if it could be shown that the particular animal which caused injury was known to have vicious tendencies and which a normally prudent person would confine.

Generally, a private party's liability would be similar in the case of a trail crossing public land where his stock was normally and legally grazing under a lease arrangement. If the animals in question were normal grazing animals and were not known to be vicious their owners would not usually be held responsible for injury to trail users caused by the animals.

Of considerable importance to this discussion are the legal ramifications in the event of trail implementation by more than one entity:

It is envisaged that control of rights-of-way for the trail would be divided among various Federal agencies, the States and Indian tribes and will be acquired by cooperative agreements, scenic easements, and purchase. Also envisaged are similar divisions of responsibility for development, operation and maintenance of the trail and that the agencies controlling the land could make agreements with other public agencies, private organizations, and individuals to develop, operate and maintain such a trail. Thus, different segments of a single trail may be owned, operated, and maintained by different entities. In addition, particular portions of a trail may be federally-owned but non-federally maintained under cooperative agreements. The question therefore arises: to whom would an injured person look for legal relief if he were injured on one of such segments of a National Scenic Trail?

Under the provisions of the Federal Tort Claims Act as amended, the Federal Government has subjected itself to liability for injuries resulting from its wrongful or negligent acts. Whether the Federal Government would be liable in a given case would depend upon the law of the State in which the act occurred in the same manner as it would apply to a private party. Thus, if a person were injured on a segment of a trail that was owned and under the exclusive control of the Federal Government, he would look to the Federal Government for recovery. On the other hand the mere designation of a segment as part of a National Scenic Trail, when it is not owned, controlled, and administered by the Federal Government, would not result in liability on the part of the Federal Government for injuries occurring on such segment.

There is a broad area of uncertainty as to the liability of the parties for injuries when ownership and control of land reside in different parties. As a general rule, in such situations it is the person who exercises control over the use of the land who is liable for injuries which result from a negligent condition of the land. Ownership alone, without control does not generally give rise to such liability.

The mere fact, however, that an injury occurred on land owned and/or controlled by such a person will not render him liable where he had no control over the person whose acts caused the injury. Thus, for example, the United States, as the party having ownership and control of a trail, would not be responsible for the injuries caused to one user of the trail by another, unless Federal employees in charge of the area knew or had reason to anticipate that the presence of the third party rendered the area dangerous to others. The same rule would apply to the creation of a dangerous or unsafe condition on the land by a third party.

In all of these situations, where the trail segment may be owned by one party, and administered by another, the extent of control of the land is very important in determining who is liable for an injury occurring thereon. On the other hand, it would be most difficult to spell out the responsibility of the Government and other cooperating entities in definitive terms. The answer would depend upon the nature of the arrangement between them insofar as it relates to the control and responsibility that is vested in either party over the condition of the trail, as well as possible vagaries of local law, in view of the provisions of the Federal Tort Claims Act, as amended. In the absence of special statutory provisions in legislation authorizing the trail, the ordinary rules of law would apply. In a large part, the particular facts in any one case would be controlling in applying the applicable principles of law which follow the general rules outlined above.

It should also be mentioned that one party can, by contract, agree to hold another harmless for injuries from certain causes. Thus, a cooperator with the Government, who agrees to assume administration of a segment of a trail, can agree to assume liability for injuries occurring on that segment. The cooperator can purchase insurance to cover this liability. In the absence of specific statutory authority, no Federal official can bind the Federal Government to assume liability for claims which, under the ordinary rules of law, would be imposed upon another. Similarly, the Government may not normally expend Federal funds for insurance. Accordingly, without special statutory authority the Federal Government could not agree to hold cooperating entities harmless against claims for injuries to persons using Federally-owned segments turned over to them for administration.

PROPOSED

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

SUPPLEMENT

U. S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation

INTRODUCTION

The following information was developed to supplement the Continental Divide Trail Report data with respect to specific nationally significant qualities and comparing those qualities to recognized nationally significant areas and attractions. This supplement also addresses the desirability of establishing the trail in relationship to other priorities, the existing supply of hiking opportunities, public demand, use of trails in the CDT corridor, and the need for new trail construction and upgrading of existing trail along the CDT route.

PROPOSED CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL STUDY REPORT
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION - APRIL 1975

A. Specific Nationally Significant Qualities 1.

Scenic Qualities

Spectacular scenery of the quality and magnitude along the proposed CDT route is not available anywhere in the continental United States other than in the North Cascade area along the Pacific Crest Trail or in the Yellowstone-Teton area of Wyoming. The trail traverses a variety of terrain, including high desert, forests, geologic formations, and mountain meadows. Flora abounds in the near views, while distant views of major valleys and mountain peaks are exceptional. There are 50 peaks over 14,000 feet visible from the trail. Extending from Canada to Mexico, this trail along the backbone of the Continent provides a north-south scenic route between the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails.



Hikers walk toward Going-to-the-Sun Mountain
Glacier National Park, Montana Credit: Robert
J. Arkins



Snow-capped mountain views of Lower Twin Lakes,
Beaverhead National Forest, Montana Credit:
Robert J. Arkins



Upper Miner Lake provides a
location for fishing amid
outstanding scenic beauty.
Beaverhead National Forest,
Montana
Credit: Robert J. Arkins



Fall color of aspen at Boreas Pass, Colorado,
Credit: Lynn demons



A lone hiker on the Trail.
Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado
Credit: Lynn demons

2. Cultural Qualities

There are significant segments of the trail and adjacent trails that were used by early-day Indians, ancient cliff dwelling tribes, Spanish explorers, and mountain men in their travels within and through the Continental Divide area. Little visible evidence is left of these activities; however, through interpretive signing, the trail users will be alerted to the cultural significance of the area. More recent evidence of railroading and water diversions that affected the cultural background of the State and Nation can be found.

Activities within the trail corridor contributed to the American culture and are associated with the Old West and the fabled miners and ranchers who developed the area. Ghost towns and abandoned ranches and mining operations, as well as opera houses, museums, and reconstructed "boom towns," are in evidence along the trail route and corridor of the proposed CDT.



The Continental Divide Trail passes through a corner of Chaco Canyon National Monument, New Mexico.
Credit: Lynn Clemons

The Tabor Opera House, Leadville,
Colorado. Actors still "walk the
boards" in this famous edifice.
Credit: Lynn Clemons



Historic South Pass City near the famed Continental Divide
crossing of the Oregon Trail. The Wyoming Recreation
Commission is currently restoring this historic site.
Credit: Randy Wagner, Wyoming Travel Commission

3. Historic Qualities

Many signs of historical activity are within the vicinity of the trail and throughout its entire length. These include the well-known Lewis and Clark, Oregon, and Mormon Trails and the lesser-known Chief Joseph Trail. Mining camps, early railroad tunnels, and Indian trails are also evident. Considerable literature has been written about these activities and is widely available. Thus, any person visiting the area may have some advance knowledge of the historical significance of the area to make the visit more meaningful. Approximately 40 historic sites, including four National Monuments, are located along the route. (See Appendix B.2 - Areas of Historic Interest - CDT.)



In 1805, the Lewis and Clark Expedition made its first crossing of the Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass on the Montana-Idaho boundary. Credit: BOR, Washington

4. Natural Qualities

The hiker of the proposed route of the CDT would encounter a great variety of terrain, geology, climate, and plant and animal life. This would include the unique and unusual character of Glacier, Yellowstone, and Rocky Mountain National Parks and the back-country solitude of 16 National Forest wilderness and primitive areas, as well as the living quality of the Red Desert in Wyoming.

Certain plants, trees, and animals that may be observed along the trail are unique to the area traversed. The Colorado portion of the trail presents many colorful scenes as the viewer passes through soil and rock formations pigmented by natural minerals occurring in the area. The wide variety of exposed geology will provide an unusual experience to the novice "rock hound" as well as the professional geologist. Several segments of the trail will highlight evidence of man as opposed to many segments that offer the solitude of the wilderness experience. Many connecting trails will allow users to choose segments of the trail that will give the recreational experience they desire.



Glacier National Park was named for the huge ice glaciers that carved this wonderland a million years ago. The Continental Divide Trail would offer a changing panorama of cascading waterfalls, sheer cliffs, glaciers, dense forests, and alpine flowers. Credit: BOR, Mid-Continent Region



Yellowstone Lake along the CDT offers fishing or solitude in the highest large lake in North America. Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming Credit: Robert J. Arkins



One of the outstanding scenic areas near the trail is Yellowstone Falls. Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming
Credit: BOR, Mid-Continent Region



Wildlife observation along the trail is one of the greatest attractions, ranging from large to small animals. In the high country, a young bullmoose can be seen with antlers still in velvet.



Prairie dogs may be observed in the lower altitudes,
Credit: BOR, Mid-Continent Region

5. Recreation Areas In Proposed CDT Corridor

Whether short hikes of one day or several weeks, the trail corridor would offer recreation activities and existing facilities for a variety of tastes. In addition to numerous camping areas, the hiker has access to high-country fishing, observation of large and small game and waterfowl, photography, and geologic study. In addition to the summer recreation use, many ski areas along the CDT corridor provide for cross-country skiing.



Horseback riding near the Continental Divide Trail.
Slate Mountain, Colorado
Credit: BOR, Mid-Continent Region



On the Continental Divide, students take a break from class in natural resources. Roosevelt National Forest, Colorado Credit: Lynn Clemons



Backpackers on lunch break in high alpine country, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado Credit: Lynn Clemons



Many ski areas adjacent to the Continental Divide offer recreation in the high mountains. Hidden Valley, Colorado



Winter along the trail beckons the cross-country skier. McClure Pass, Colorado Credit: BOR, Mid-Continent Region



B. Desirability of the Trail

1. Priority

The trail plan calls for development in phases extending over a 30-year period; however, hiking and horseback riding has increased more than 50- percent since 1967 in the Rocky Mountain Region.

Priority for development of the CDT would be given to those segments with the highest anticipated use. These are generally accessible to large population centers as well as noted tourist destination areas. Other priority segments will be developed which promise the most attractive and challenging recreation improvement ^{2/} of opportunity." There is a high priority for existing trails on Federal lands to make them safe and useable, which includes existing portions of the CDT.

2. Existing Hiking Opportunities - Supply -(Appendix A, Tables 1 to 5)

Approximately 60 percent of the proposed route of the Continental Divide Trail would utilize existing trails. Ranging from a low of 10 percent in New Mexico to a high of nearly 90 percent in Montana,- about 2,000 miles of the proposed CDT are existing trails.-/

1/ Based on available information by Region 2, Forest Service, USDA

2/ Table 7, CDT Report 3/ Table 4, CDT Report

Trails in Glacier, Yellowstone, and Rocky Mountain National Parks total approximately 2,200 miles,^{1/} with 154² miles of existing trail located on the CDT route. Back-country hiking in the CDT corridor of these National Parks indicates an annual use increase of 12- percent.

There are over 250 side trails providing access to the Divide. All are located in National Forests and National Parks, and many are within 12 wilderness or primitive areas inaccessible by road.

Traditionally, most of the existing trails are in the higher elevations where they are built to cross the range rather than follow it. They run in a general east-west direction along the major drainages.

total of 81³ miles of existing trails^{3/} In Idaho and Montana, a CDT route. There are approximately 5,000- miles of^{4/} is on the trails within National Forests that are traversed by (intersected with or crossed by) the CDT; however, 75 percent of existing trails in these National Forests require upgrading.

1/ Available information by National Park Service.

2/ Table 6, CDT Report

3/ Table 4, CDT Report

4/ Based on available updated information by Region 1, Forest Service.

In Colorado and Wyoming, there are 1,016~ miles of existing trails^{2/} on the CDT. There are 7,676~ miles of existing trails within National Forests traversed by the CDT. Although approximately 50 percent of this existing trail mileage is considered inadequate or unsafe, trail use for hiking in these National Forests has increased significantly.

In New Mexico, 79~ miles of existing trails are located on 2,800~ miles of existing trails^{2/} in the CDT route. There are National Forests traversed by the CDT.

3. Demand - General

The demand for hiking, ski touring, and riding trails is high and increasing in the Rocky Mountain West. Studies conducted at selected locations along the proposed route in Colorado indicate that about two-thirds of the trail use is by local residents. A majority of this use originates in Colorado's Front Range, which represents 80 percent of the State's population, including metropolitan Denver and the Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, and Pueblo urban areas. About one-third of the use is from out-of-State visitors, principally from the Midwest States.

1/ Table 4, CDT Report

2/ Based on available updated information by Regions 2 and 3, Forest Service

The typical trail user travels in a group of two to four people—usually for about three-fourths of a day. Overnight users seldom spend more than two nights out in any one trip. Larger groups from the Midwest spend more time per trip, but seldom stay more than four to five days. The trail experience could range from an hour's outing to several weeks, and from one mile to several hundred. (Appendix B.I - Expected User Groups)

Local interest in trails that would feed people to the CDT has increased since compiling the original CDT report. Trails such as the Colorado Mountain Trail— (Denver to Durango, Colorado) and the Front Range Trail (Pueblo to Fort Collins, Colorado) are being sponsored by local organizations, the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and the Colorado Governor's Trail Council, with work on the trails being accomplished by volunteer help in cooperation with the Forest Service. The Colorado Mountain Trail overlays the CDT for approximately 50 percent of the CDT's distance in the State, or over 300 miles.^{2/}

The per capita ratio of horseowners is high along the trail corridor. Rocky Mountain National Park has the highest use for horseback riding of any western park. The surrounding National Forest Trail System also has a high demand for horse trails.—

1/ Commonly called the Colorado Trail.

2/ See Appendix C - Map

3/ Information by Region 2, Forest Service.

Interest in winter use of trails for cross-country skiing has significantly increased and will produce additional use on the CDT around the 34 major winter sports areas in Colorado located within close proximity to the trail. It is estimated that cross-country skiers number in excess of one million nationwide. In the Rocky Mountain States traversed by the CDT, cross-country skiing activity increased by approximately 500 percent between 1971 and 1974. The annual increase of over 100 percent by users of cross-country ski trails may level off to about 20 percent by 1980. To provide for this phenomenal demand for cross-country skiing, loop trails are being planned to connect established ski areas to the Colorado Mountain Trail and Continental Divide Trail.-

4. Use of Trails in the CDT Corridor - (Appendix A, Tables 1 to 5)

General

Present use of existing segments of the proposed CDT is concentrated on existing trail segments in Glacier National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the National Forest lands in Colorado. These areas will continue to receive the heaviest visitor use. It is not expected nor desired that heavy use of the wilderness and primitive area segments of the proposed CDT would take place.

\J Information by Region 2, Forest Service.

Potential visitation to the proposed CDT as an extended long-distance trail is extremely difficult to estimate. However, the projected use for hiking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing within the trail corridor has been estimated and updated from available information. Hiking and horseback riding in the CDT corridor is expected to increase 15 percent annually. The CDT would satisfy a portion of the growing demand for trails and serve as a base for a system of feeder trails and connecting trails. Established trends and patterns of trail use should not materially change as a result of national designation. The greatest levels of use would be expected where the potential is already high—those segments in close proximity to population centers and in the more noted tourist-destination areas.

5. Needs - (Appendix A, Table 6)

Montana - 749 miles - Idaho - 182 miles of CDT

Updated information indicates that upgrading is required for
in National Forests^{1/} approximately 3,75CT" miles of trails

1/ Based on available updated information by Region 1, Forest Service.

resulting from an annual increase of 16- percent in Montana and Idaho. Upgrading is required for 696 miles of existing trail on the CDT route, 118 miles of new trails are needed, satisfactory.- The CDT would require 17^{2/} and 117 miles are miles of new trail in Glacier National Park.-^{3/}

Wyoming - 607 miles of CDT

An increase in trail use of about 13~ percent annually will necessitate upgrading 225 miles of the existing trail on the CDT route.

In addition, 88 miles of new trails are needed, while 294 Yellowstone National Park,^{2/} miles are satisfactory.-' In 24 miles of new trail would be needed for the CDT route. -'

Colorado - 772 miles of CDT - Priority #1-Approximately

4,000=-' miles of existing trails in the National Forests of Colorado are inadequate and require upgrading. Trail use in Colorado is increasing at a rate of ^ percent annually, resulting in a need for an additional

miles of trails in National Forests along the CDT corridor in Colorado and southern Wyoming. Of 772 miles of the CDT in

1/ Based on available updated information by Regions 1 and 2, Forest Service. 2/ Table 9, CDT Report 3/ Table 6, CDT Report 4V Table 8, CDT Report

Colorado, 365 miles require upgrading, 275 miles of new trail must be developed, and 132 miles are satisfactory.^{2/}

New Mexico - 792 miles of CDT

The use of trails in the State is increasing at a rate of 15~ percent annually and an additional 752 - miles of trails are needed in National Forests along the CDT corridor. Of 792 miles of the CDT proposed in New Mexico, 24 miles require upgrading, 713 miles of new trails are needed, and 55 miles are satisfactory.^{2/}-

\j Based on available updated information by Region 3, Forest Service.
2/ Table 9, CDT Report

APPENDIX

A. Tables - Supply, Use, Needs

1. Montana
2. Idaho
3. Wyoming
4. Colorado
5. New Mexico
6. Needs for Trails - CDT and National Forests Traversed by the CDT.

B. 1. Expected User Groups for the CDT

2. Areas of Historic Interest - CDT Corridor
3. Colorado Mountain Trails

C. Map - The Proposed Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (Colorado) Relation to Colorado Mountain Trail and Connecting Trails

D. Comments from the Governors and Federal Agencies

Table 1

MONTANA

Mileage of Proposed CDT in State

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Forest Service	606
National Park Service	96
Bureau of Land Management	7
State and Local	2
Private	38
Total	749

SUPPLY

Existing Trail on CDT - 88% 658 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in National Forests
Traversed by CDT.

Hiking and Horseback Riding 5,000 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in Glacier National Park

Hiking and Horseback Riding 940 miles

USENational Forest Trail Use in CDT Corridor

Montana and Idaho

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
Backpacking	153,000*	186,000*	225,000*
(Visits)		(16% estimated annual increase)	

*Estimated by trail traffic counters - Forest Service R-1

Glacier National Park Trail Use in CDT Corridor

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Backpacking	26,500*	29,000*	30,000*	31,800	41,300	53,700
(Visits)		(12% estimated annual increase)				

*NPS estimate - overnight backpacking

MONTANA
(Continued)

<u>State Trail Use - Existing and Projected</u> (Figures derived from SCORP; in activity days)				
		<u>Activity</u>		<u>1974</u>
<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>		
Hiking	184,232	186,078	245,949	257,924
Horseback riding		21,499	22,415	27,000
31,585				

Table 2

IDAHO

Mileage in State Along Continental Divide Trail

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Proposed Miles</u>
Forest Service	158
National Park Service	1
Bureau of Land Management	13
State and Local	2
Private	8
TOTAL	182

SUPPLY

Existing Trail on CDT - 85%	155 miles
-----------------------------	-----------

USE

(Included in National Forest Trail Use for Montana)

Table 3

WYOMING

Mileage of Proposed CDT in State

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Forest Service	277
National Park Service	77
Bureau of Land Management	160
State and Local	23
Private	<u>70</u>
Total	607

SUPPLY

Existing Trail on CDT - 86% 519 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in National Forests
Traversed by CDT.

Hiking and Horseback Riding 2,700 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in Yellowstone National
Park.

Hiking and Horseback Riding 1,000 miles

USENational Forest Trail Use in CDT Corridor.

(Included in National Forest Trail Use
for Colorado.)

Yellowstone National Park Trail Use in CDT Corridor

	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Backpacking	33,154*	36,219*	41,282*	45,400	68,100	88,500
(Visits)		(12% estimated annual increase)				

*NPS estimate - overnight backpacking

Existing and Projected - State Trail Use
(Derived from SCORP; figures in activity days)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Hiking	816,935	829,782	894,009	958,236

Table 4

COLORADO

<u>Mileage of Proposed CDT</u>	<u>in State</u>
<u>Agency</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Forest Service	697
National Park Service	33
Bureau of Land Management	5
State and local	9
Private	<u>28</u>
TOTAL	772

SUPPLY

Existing Trail on CDT - 64% - 497 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in National Forests
Traversed by CDT

Hiking and Horseback Riding - 7,676 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in Rocky Mountain
National Park

Hiking and Horseback Riding - 320 miles

USE

National Forest Trail Use in CDT		Corridor
<hr/>		
	Colorado and Wyoming	
	<hr/>	
	Visitor Days	
	<hr/>	
1973	1974	1975
	527,500	588,200 (13%
	estimated annual increase)	
466,800*	Forest Trails and Related Recreation	
<hr/>		
	Area Use in CDT Corridor	
	<hr/>	
1972	1973	1974
<hr/>		
6,449,505*	6,514,000*	6,969,980*

*Estimate by Forest Service - R-2

COLORADO
(Continued)

Rocky Mountain National Park Trail Use in
CDT Corridor

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1980	1985
Backpacking (Visits)	36,132*	37,180*	47,740*	53,500	88,500	136,900

(12% estimated annual increase)

*NPS estimate - overnight backpacking.

Existing and Projected State Trail Use
(Derived from SCORP; figures in activity days)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Hiking	39,025,615	41,367,151	51,295,267	61,554,320
Horseback Riding	17,861,766	18,933,471	23,666,838	29,583,548
Bicycling	2,505,486	2,625,740	3,387,204	4,064,644
Mountain Climbing	1,153,485	1,222,694	1,601,729	1,980,764

Table 5

NEW MEXICO

Mileage in State Along Continental Divide Trail

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Forest Service	278
National Park Service	0
Bureau of Land Management	124
State and Local	66
Private	204
Indian Reservation	<u>120</u>
TOTAL	792

SUPPLY

Existing Trail on CDT - 10% - 79 miles

Approximate Trails Mileage in National Forests
Traversed by CDT

Hiking and Horseback Riding - 2,800 miles

USE

National Forest Trail Use in CDT Corridor
Visitor Days Per Year

(15% estimated annual increase)

	<u>*Estimate by Forest Service - R-3</u>	
1972	1973	1974
7,300*	8,500*	10,000*

Existing and Projected State Trail Use
(Derived from SCORP; figures in activity days)

	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1985</u>
Hiking	12,401,501	12,761,871	14,910,064	17,629,257
Horseback				
Riding	4,009,800	4,110,764	4,687,285	5,408,924
Biking	7,659,388	7,801,228	9,181,350	9,361,472
Mountain				
Climbing	276,032	279,048	294,110	308,943

Table 6

NEEDS - CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

State	Length (Miles)	Existing Upgrade	Trail (Miles) Suitable	New Trail (Miles)
Montana	749	558	101	90
Idaho	182	138	16	28
Wyoming	607	225	294	88
Colorado	772	365	132	275
New Mexico	792	24	55	713
TOTALS	3,102	1,310	598	1,194

NEEDS FOR TRAILS IN NATIONAL FORESTS
TRAVERSED BY CDT

	<u>Upgrade</u>	New
Montana		
Idaho	3,750	
Colorado		
Wyoming	3,789	701
New Mexico		752

EXPECTED USER GROUPS FOR THE
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL

Backpackers	Nature photographers
Nature walkers	Mountain climbers
Day hikers	Cross-country skiers
Horseback riders	Snowshoers

Note: Winter use is expected to be about 5 percent of trail use.

Below is a partial list of organizations that have an interest in the Continental Divide Trail and are a part of the user groups:

Sierra Club (National and local)
National Audubon Society
Colorado Mountain Club
Wilderness Society (National and local)
Colorado Recreation Trails
North American Trail Riders Conference
Trail Users Council of Colorado
Hikers Skiers
Climbers Snowshoers
Horsemen AA
Saddle Club
National Hiking and Ski Touring Association
Colorado Mountain Trails Foundation Larimer
County Horsemen's Association Aurora
Horsemen Association Colorado Trail
Breakers Cavalier Riding Club Rocky
Mountain Trails Association El Paso County
Horseman's Association U. S. Air Force
Academy Saddle Club Aspen Ski Club Boy
Scouts of America Girl Scouts of America
Campfire Girls American Horse Council
Arabian Horse Owners' Foundation
International Trail Riders' Association
Citizens for Hike and Bike Ski Touring
Council
National Hiking and Ski Touring Association
Appaloosa Horse Club American Orienteering
Service Colorado Horsemen's Council
Organized Horseback Riding Organizations
International Backpackers Association

National Forest Use of the CDT (Estimated Visitor Use) - 1972-74

Rocky Mountain Region - Colorado and Wyoming

The figures estimated for visitor day use (page 57 - Table 1) have been updated based on known growth rate factors for hiking, horseback riding, skiing, and mountain climbing. The impacts of secondary activity, as noted above, were also used as a basis for raising projected visitor day figures.

The following segments of the CDT are keyed to page 57 of the original report:

Segment	Average Visitor Days/Mile of Trail/Year	Projected Visitor Days Per Year
South Boundary, Shoshone National Forest, to North Boundary, Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming		
Original Data	35	9,000
New Data	120	31,000
North Boundary, Medicine Bow National Forest in Wyoming to Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado		
Original Data	130	21,000
New Data	390	64,000
South Boundary, Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado to New Mexico-Colorado Line		
Original Data	380	239,000
New Data	650	405,000

AREAS OF HISTORIC INTEREST WITHIN
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE TRAIL CORRIDOR

MONTANA

Flathead County

Marias Pass Lewis and

Clark County

Lewis and Clark Pass - 1806
Mullan Pass - 1862
Marysvillei' - Mining Town - 1876

Silver Bow County

Butte Historic District^{2/3/}
Pipestone Pass
Butte Copper Mines .
W. A. Clark Mansion-'

Beaverhead County

o/
Big Hole Battlefield National Monument-' - 1877 Trail
Creek - Chief Joseph flight - 1877 Lemhi Pass-'-'- 1805,
first crossing of CDT by Lewis Bannack Pass - Montana
history - historic route

WYOMING

Park County

Wilson Price Hunt Route - 1811

Fremont County

^{9 I'M} South Pass- -' - Oregon Trail -
Mormon Trail
South Pass City - - Oregon Trail
Union Passl'

Sublette County

Capt. B.L.E. Bonneville Route - 1832

Carbon County

Whiskey Gap Battle Lake Bridger's Pass-
Overland Trail Town of Battle 3/

-
- 1/ Eligible for inclusion on National Register of Historic Places.
2/ Indicates those sites that are designated National Historic Landmarks.
3/ Indicates those sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

COLORADO

Grand County

Lulu City

Gillpin County

Moffat Road

Lake County

o/

Dexter Cabin, Leadville
Healy House, Leadville
Leadville Historic District

Pitkin County

Independence Mill Site^{3/},

Independence Ghost Town

Gunnison County Alpine Pass

Tunnel

Conejos County

Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad^{3/}

NEW MEXICO

McKinley County

Chaco Canyon National Monument^{3/}

Valencia County

3/

El Morro National Monument
Old Fort Wingate Road

Catron County

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
Silver City

Hidalgo County

Mormon Battalion Route
Shakespeare Ghost Town

THE COLORADO MOUNTAIN TRAIL
(300 miles of the CDT)

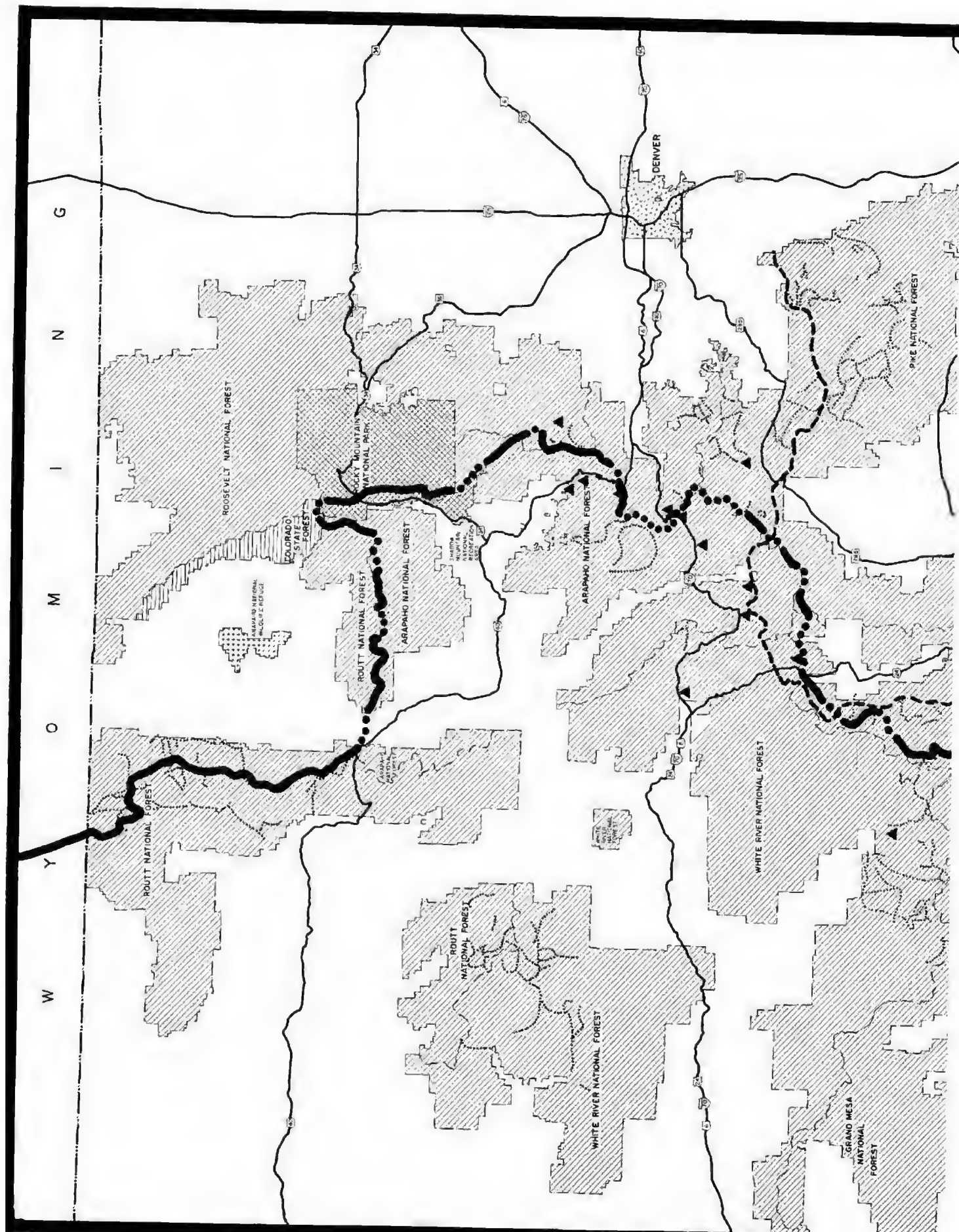
The Colorado Mountain Trail, commonly called the Colorado Trail, incorporates a concept that seeks to gain public support and assistance in identifying and developing a corridor of nonvehicular trails with needed facilities, from Denver to Durango, using Federal, State, and private trails. This is a concept involving people - the same people who will use this corridor in their leisure-time activities for recreation and educational experiences.

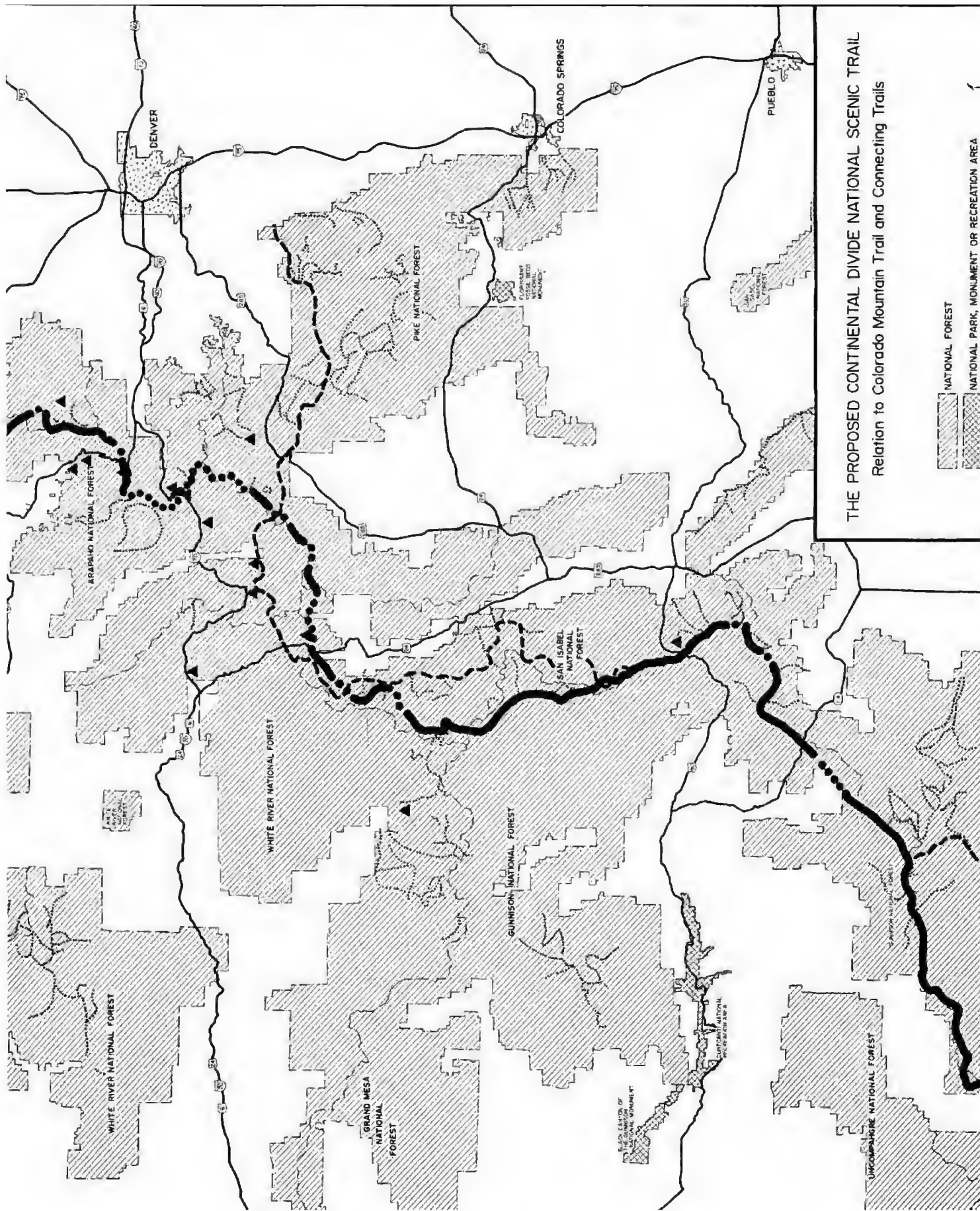
This corridor encompasses land rich in historical and recreational values and a network of trails with potential for both summer and winter use. The corridor is within easy access of metropolitan areas, towns, colleges, universities, and resorts - thus a good cross section of the State.

This system will utilize existing trails for much of the 350-mile distance; more challenging than a walk in "city park" but not as strenuous as a jaunt through wilderness.

Access points and loops will allow the hiker to take on as much or as little of the experience as desired. Ski touring will be possible on many segments of the trail. A hut system could serve the public at carefully selected locations on a year-round basis - especially the multi-day hiker and ski tourer.

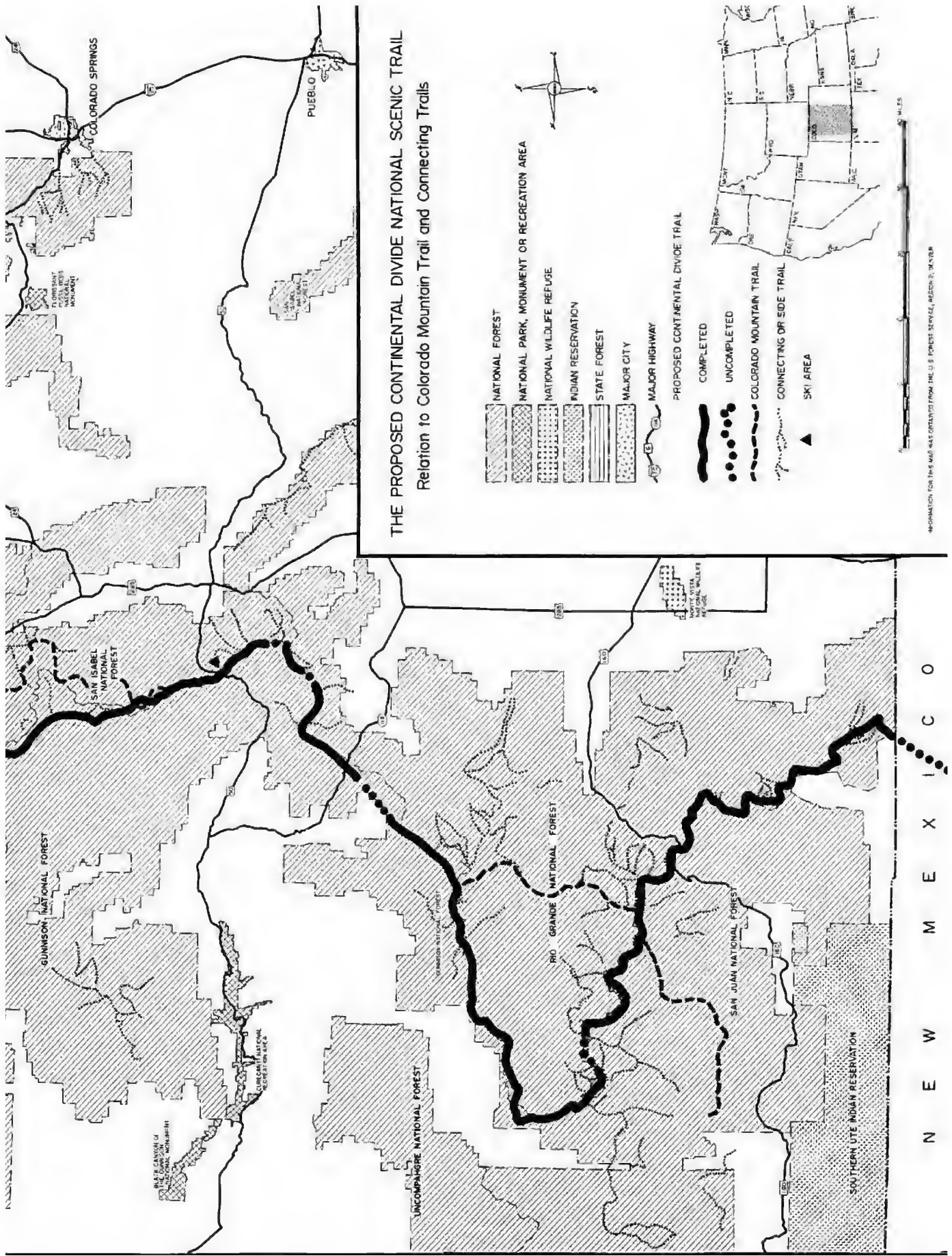
Scenic overlooks, wildlife interpretation points, areas where resources have been or are being "used," geologic formations, and historical points of interest will be identified to aid the hiker or ski tourer in fuller understanding and enjoyment of the environment.





THE PROPOSED CONTINENTAL DIVIDE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL
 Relation to Colorado Mountain Trail and Connecting Trails

 NATIONAL FOREST
 NATIONAL PARK, MONUMENT OR RECREATION AREA



Appendix D

Comments from the

Governors and Federal Agencies



BRUCE KING
GOVERNOR

STATE OF NEW
MEXICO

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SANTA FE
S7501

September 14, 1973

Mr. Derrell P. Thompson
Regional Director
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Mid-Continent Region
Post Office Box 24387
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to review and comment on the Department of the Interior's environmental impact statement for the proposed Continental Divide/Kit Carson National Scenic Trails.

We find your Department's proposed report concerning the Trails in New Mexico to be very feasible and desirable. With the establishment of New Mexico's State Trails System Act by the 31st Legislature, 1st Session, 1973, consultation and coordination of these proposed trail developments in New Mexico can be accomplished. New Mexico approved the designation and authorization of the Continental Divide/Kit Carson Trails.

In review of your proposed environmental impact statement, we find that only minor impacts associated with these trail developments will occur. With the coordination of design, operation and maintenance of the proposed trails between federal and state agencies, the impact upon the environment will be reduced and the economic and social benefits would increase.

In final review of this report, New Mexico is dedicated to the conservation and protection of New Mexico's environment and to provide more meaningful recreational opportunities to our residents as well as out-of-state guests. With the proposed development of these trails, New Mexico will progress toward its goal of providing outdoor recreation opportunities.

Sincerely,

BRUCE KING
GOVERNOR



JOHN D. VANDERHOOF
Governor

November 21, 1973

Mr. Nathaniel Reed Secretary
of the Interior U.S.
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Nat:

The State of Colorado has reviewed the Continental Divide Trail Study Report by the U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. First, let me congratulate you on a job well done. I fully support a national trail along the Continental Divide and will support a request for the legislature to appropriate the funds for Colorado's share. This trail should provide an opportunity to help meet hiking needs as described in our State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

We note a slight discrepancy in your report involving land along the trail belonging to Colorado. On pages 90 and 91 you state that nine miles are owned by Colorado, but on page 120 (Table 13) you state only seven miles.

At the bottom of page 92, you refer to tundra as vegetation. Tundra is actually a biome or community zone containing both floral and faunal units. In Colorado, the alpine tundra supports vegetation which is grazed by both livestock and wildlife. In addition, it provides important habitat for a number of wildlife species. Since a major portion of the Continental Divide Trail lies above timberline, it might be desirable to describe the beauty of this zone and mention its contribution to the watershed.

The Draft Environmental Statement of the proposed Continental Divide/Kit Carson National Scenic Trails is adequate. We suggest changes on pages 13, 33, 34 and 35 to coincide with our comments on the report.

The environmental impact of the trail itself should be minimal if proper construction, maintenance and control are performed. However, the discussion of visitor impact upon wildlife on page 41 should be expanded. Increased visitor use could have an adverse effect upon certain wildlife species which are intolerant to man. These animals require isolation at various times of the year and a large influx of people


Mr. Nathaniel Reed
November 21, 1973

or constant harassment will be detrimental to these species as well as others. In addition, the location of recreational facilities should avoid areas vital to wildlife or areas having unique values.

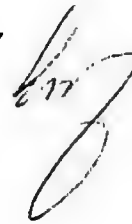
We have enclosed additional comments from the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation for your information.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward to prompt Congressional authorization of these two fine National Scenic Trails.

Sincerely,



7



y.f.

/" " John D.
Vanderhoof

y/

JDV:k
End.

cc: Charles Shumate, George O'Malley, Jack Grieb, Ray
Simpson, Tom W. Ten Eyck



DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

6060 BROADWAY, DENVER, COLO. 80216

STATE OF COLORADO

John D. Vanderhoof, Governor
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
W. Ten Eyck, Executive Director

GEORGE T. O'MALLEY, JR., Director

PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION BOARD:

Mrs. Rowena Rogers, Chairman
Lyman W. Thomas, Vice Chairman
Herbert I. Jones, Secretary
Marvin Elkins, Member
Theodore R. Schubert, Member

September 11, 1973

Mr. Derrell P. Thompson, Director
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Mid-
Continent Region Building 41,
Federal Center P.O. Box 25387
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Mr. Thompson:

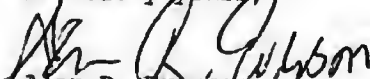
We have finished reviewing the Continental Divide/Kit Carson Trail environmental statement, and are pleased to comment favorable on aspects which involve Colorado.

Our state comprehensive outdoor recreation planning has consistently pointed to the need for additional hiking and other trail opportunities in Colorado; this trail would provide the opportunity to meet a number of these needs. We agree that development of the Continental Divide Trail, and management of that Trail, will more than compensate any minor environmental damage caused by trail construction. In fact, we would go one step further, and suggest that "No Action" would not eliminate the impacts as claimed. Instead, these impacts would continue to exist, but without the benefit of adequate facilities. The need for trail facilities in Colorado will not cease through inaction.

In Colorado, we hope it will be possible to develop this trail, and make it available for use very quickly. However, it may be possible to provide ample protection of trail integrity with less than title to a 200 foot wide corridor. A minimum corridor for our state recreational trail system is 50 feet; a corridor more than 150 feet wide has not yet been necessary for state trail purposes. This is possible within the impact statement description, but the wording of the impact statement seems to suggest acquisition of a 200 foot corridor. Acquisition should guarantee public access and maintain a quality recreational trail experience.

In conclusion, we wish again to support the prompt designation of this trail so that it can begin to serve Coloradans and Colorado's many visitors each year.

Sincerely yours,


Alan R. Everson
Senior Planner

ARE:bb



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

StP 1 « 1973 IN REPLY REFER TO:

Honorable Nathaniel Reed
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Reed:

This is in reply to your letter of July 27 requesting comments on the Department of the Interior report on the Continental Divide/Kit Carson Trail.

One of our primary interests in considering open space and recreation issues is how they will affect those parts of our population with the greatest unmet need for outdoor recreation experiences—low income people with little mobility who live in the high density areas of our cities. Trails such as those proposed here are relatively unavailable to such people.

We recognize that there are many values that are advanced by an expanded network of trails. We are not, however, in a position to determine whether the Continental Divide/Kit Carson Trail proposal represents the best use of the funds and other resources involved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Warren H. Butler", is written over a circular stamp. The stamp contains the text "Warr" and "De" in a serif font, with "Warr" on the top line and "De" on the bottom line.

Warren H. Butler
Deputy Assistant Secretary



HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENT

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

1 AUG

Honorable Nathaniel Reed
Assistant Secretary for Fish
and Wildlife and Parks
United States Department of
the Interior Washington,
D.C. 202^0

Dear Mr. Reed:

We have reviewed the proposed report and draft environmental
impact statement on the Continental Divide/Kit Carson Trails
in response to your request of July 27, 1973 and have no comments
on either the report or the statement.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "George W. Milias", is positioned above the typed name and title.

George W. Milias
Director for
Environmental Quality

Sincerely,



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

Honorable Nathaniel P. Reed
Assistant Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

January 22

Dear Mr. Reed:

Your July 27, 1973, request for review of the Draft Continental Divide Trail Study Report initiated further consideration of the inclusion of the "Kit Carson Trail" in the report.

Several discussions concerning this matter have taken place since July between Forest Service and Bureau of Outdoor Recreation personnel in an attempt to resolve the issue prior to preparation of the final report. Based on these discussions, we are requesting that all references to the "Kit Carson Trail" be removed from the report.

The "Kit Carson Trail," as presented in the report, developed from what was originally proposed in the report "Trails for America," dated December 1966, as a "loop" trail to the Continental Divide Trail.

Our initial objection to the "Kit Carson Trail" was because of the change in concept from a "loop" to the proposal that it be recommended as a separate National Scenic Trail.

Developments over the last year or so have forced us to object to the "Kit Carson Trail" for additional reasons. First of all, the proposed "Kit Carson Trail" would traverse the Wheeler Peak and Pecos Wildernesses - areas which are already being heavily used and where our objective is capacity management. During the past year, both of these areas were placed under a permit system by the Forest Service to determine and regulate use. The areas may not be able to withstand a trail of national significance which will generate more use and detract from their wilderness character. Secondly, the proposed location of the "Kit Carson Trail" will be close enough to the sacred Blue Lake area of the Taos Indians to create, for these people, a serious concern about the violation of their sacred area by trail users. The Taos Indians have requested that we support their position in objecting to further developments which would increase use in this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Long", is positioned above the typed name.

Robert W. Long
Assistant Secretary for Conservation;
Research and Education



ASSISTANT SECRETARY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

OCT4 1973

Honorable Nathaniel P. Reed
Assistant Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Reed:

We have reviewed within the Department of Transportation the Department of the Interior's proposed report on the Continental Divide/Kit Carson Trails Study, transmitted with your letter of July 27, 1973, which originally requested our comments. We appreciate the time extension you have granted.

Although the proposals do not appear to have an adverse impact upon transportation programs with national implications, we believe the following transportation related concerns merit your attention:

1. Where trails cross access-controlled Interstate and primary highways, safety provisions for hikers, riders or motorists appear to be insufficiently described. Where grade separated structures will be provided, the final report should indicate who will be responsible for their financing.
2. Some mention is made of extensive use of primitive roads as part of the trail network. At some trail road locations where vehicular traffic may dominate, it will be important to include safety provisions for foot or horseback travelers.
3. It may be possible to provide for the trails within existing or planned highway rights-of-way where the trails parallel the highway for short distances.

As the proposed plans are implemented, we recommend that close coordination be maintained with the State Highway Departments affected and the Federal Highway Administration. It will be helpful if joint planning at popular trailhead locations can anticipate increased traffic volumes likely to occur.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this material.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.", is positioned above the printed name.

Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Environment, Safety, and
Consumer Affairs



WYOMING
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
CHEYENNE

STANLEY K. HATHAWAY
GOVERNOR

August 29, 1973

The Honorable Rogers B. Morton
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Comments on Continental Divide Trail
I. Study Report
II. Draft Environmental Statement

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above mentioned subjects, and I hope the following will assist you in the matter.

I. Study Report - From the beginning, Wyoming has viewed the concept of a Continental Divide Trail in a favorable light, realizing that such a concept has the potential of highlighting much of the nation's most outstanding natural resources. On the other hand, we have continually stressed what we visualize as a practical approach to the proposal and one which we can foresee as being successfully implemented.

The first and most basic problem we foresee is that of establishing a trail to be used exclusively by horseback riders and hikers. In Wyoming, this group of recreationists is quite small when compared to the general recreating public and we are confident that our state's present wilderness and primitive areas provide sufficient resources for this segment of the public. Other recreationists should be allowed to use the proposed trail in areas where such use is deemed appropriate.

Much of the Continental Divide Trail Study Report deals with statements concerning the advisability of using pre-existing access routes, trails, facilities, etc., and we strongly agree with this approach. We also agree with the statement in the report that agencies already administering various segments of the proposed trail should continue to do so in the future. The report should also strongly recommend that present grazing, horseback riding, hiking, mining, vehicular access, etc., to and along the proposed trail routes should be continued. It would also considerably strengthen the report if it were clearly stated that these options could be expanded or curtailed if needs indicate such a change would be beneficial in the future.

The Honorable Rogers B. Morton

Page 2

August 29, 1973

A strong point made in the report is that the agencies now in control of the various segments of the proposed trail not only do not have sufficient money to develop this trail but they are presently not able to operate and maintain the existing trails within their jurisdiction. This point is well taken and such a situation would possibly indicate that any national money, of the type mentioned in this report, should first be utilized to take care of apparent higher priority trail developments. Such a situation would also indicate that any subsequent surplus money might also be more beneficially allocated to these same agencies to take care of other pre-established high priority developments.

In summary, it is our position in this matter that the basic concept of a Continental Divide Trail is desirable but to increase this desirability, and hopefully the opportunity for the successful development thereof, it is imperative that the report expand the concept of using more of the resources and developments in existence along the proposed route of the trail. The concept of using simple signing, the use of simply constructed facilities at major trail-road intersections, the use of vehicles where appropriate and the continuance of existing and future uses near and on the trail should also be expanded within this report. Taken as a whole this report seems to have taken a simple concept and expanded it to such an extent that the desirability of such a development is questionable.

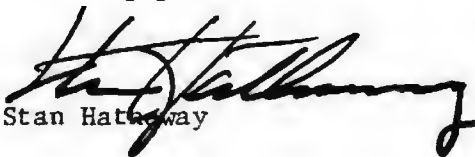
If the above suggestions can be incorporated within the National System of Trails, I feel this proposed national designation of the Continental Divide Trail would be desirable. If our suggestions are not compatible with such a designation, I would recommend that another type of designation be investigated.

I view the statements found within Section 7(a) of the National Trails Act as extremely important to the success of this proposal because I believe the above mentioned points fit within these perimeters,

II. Draft Environmental Statement - I feel it would be beneficial to correlate the Draft Environmental Statement with our suggested action given for the report. Taken in total, we feel the suggestions listed herein limit the overall complexity and disruptive features of the proposed trail and it would be our hope that this would be verified in a relative Draft Environmental Statement.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,


Stan Hathaway

SH:vhe

cc: Mr. Paul H. Westedt, Director